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**VILLAGE FOLK: EXPLORING THE FEMALE BLACK
SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S PERCEPTION OF ROLE
CONFUSION AND BURNOUT IN URBAN SCHOOLS IN SOUTH
LOUISIANA**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Education

by

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It is with great honor and gratitude that I must first give thanks to God, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Many thoughts fill my mind as I attempt to express all thoughts and emotions experienced on this journey. I would like to dedicate this work to my parents. Especially my mother, Rosia Duncan, who oftentimes reminded me I can be and do anything I put effort into. Your love, prayers and teachings are forever with me. I admire your dedication to the ministry of Jesus. Your unwavering support in my pursuit to earning a PhD means dominates the adversity faced while on this journey. Although you do not have a formal PhD, your wisdom and willingness to share all you have with others exceeds any education the world could give. Thank you, mom. Your demonstration of strength and poise are unmatched and for that, I am truly grateful.

This dissertation is especially dedicated to my family. To my husband, thank you for being the quiet push I needed along the way. There are no words to express how your belief in my abilities has been a source of support and encouragement. Brandon, your sacrifices, persistence, and love allowed me to endure this journey. And to my children BJ, RJ, Bela, and Brylee, I love you. Your questions about my writing gave me strength to keep going. I admire and appreciate your love and giving me my proudest title, “Mommy.”

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined female Black school counselor's perceptions regarding their role when working with students – specifically Black students. More so, this study looked at cultural influence on female Black school counselors' thoughts and feelings relative to role confusion and burnout. Black Feminist Thought and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs served as the theoretical framework that guided this study. In consideration for cultural differences, female Black school counselor's perceptions can be used to further explain the phenomenon of role confusion and burnout.

More than 10 invitations to participate, interviews were conducted with five female Black school counselors. The research questions for this study were (1) How did female Black school counselors perceive their role when working with Black students? (2) How did female Black school counselors explain how to cope with role confusion and burnout caused by cultural expectations along with multiple role expectations from administration, teachers, students, and parents? (3) How do cultural expectations co-mingle, blend, and merge with their perceived role of a school counselor? Multiple studies have shown the negative impact of role confusion and burnout on school counselors. The results of this study can provide valuable information and add to the existing body of literature, extending a more in-depth review of such experience by a select group of school counselors.

Results of this qualitative study were catalogued by themes, revealing the perceptions of the participants. The voices of female Black school counselors included in this study were heard, as their quotes embody their lived experiences. Through their experiences, it was evident that the role of school counselors remains ambiguous. In addition to vague job functions and roles, female Black school counselors cited cultural expectations from Black students and parents to

function as a parent and or mentor. Essentially creating duties that extend beyond suggested social and or emotional support outlined by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA)

- furthering the role confusion for female Black school Counselors. Implications and recommendations for policy and practice are presented to further investigate this phenomenon.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

I'm convinced that Black women possess a special indestructible strength that allows us to not only get down, but to get up, to get through, and to get over. –
Janet Jackson

Background Statement

“School counselors are often overwhelmed by increasing job responsibilities, expectations, and array of duties” (Cervoni & Delucia-Waack, 2011, p. 3) and as result, school counselors are at risk for burnout and job dissatisfaction. In 2018 through 2019, the National Center for Education Statistics reported there were 117,839 elementary, middle, and high school counselors employed in the United States (nces.ed.gov). Specifically, in the state of Louisiana, there are currently 1,613 school counselors (nces.ed.gov). The research conducted on role confusion in the school counseling field overwhelmingly focuses on majority White school counselors with less than 10% representing Black school counselors (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Butler & Constantine, 2005; Holman, Watts, Robles-Pina, & Grubbs, 2018), thus leaving the voice of Black school counselors and how they experience role confusion with limited attention and investigations.

Role ambiguity and increasing non-counseling duties beyond counselor preparation are two major factors impacting job satisfaction for secondary school counselors. The struggle with role confusion has a long-standing history within the professional school counseling field and has without resolve, resulted in negative self-efficacy (Jellison, 2013). Assuming, that as a collective, all races of people experience a phenomenon in the same manner, is erroneous and warrants further examinations and research into the specifics experienced by female Black school counselors. Given that school counselors experience role confusion as a result of role ambiguity and also experience subsequent burnout, and in consideration of the lack of investigations into the role confusion and burnout from the female Black school counselor's

perspective, the purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of female Black school counselors regarding cultural expectations within the context of role confusion, role ambiguity and burnout. Such a proposed study is needed and warranted and will assist the field, helping to fill the gap in the literature.

Culturally, the Black community has a tendency to attend to the development of Black girls and boys and by doing so (French, Lewis & Neville, 2013), “given that school counselors work in both the mental health and education professions, it is logical to conclude that school counselors are also at risk of developing burnout” (Holman, Watts, Robles-Pina, & Grubbs, 2018, p. 129). There are specific factors to consider when working with Black students such as low academic performance, racial and societal disparities, and a long history of Black students not having access to resources to promote academic achievement (Noguera, 2003). Research suggests the use of cultural competence while working with Black students to reduce the impact of these factors on Black students (Noguera, 2003).

With the school counseling profession being regarded as evolving along with role ambiguity and misalignment of counselor roles, the work of female Black school counselors can be another layer in school counselor role confusion. The role confusion experienced by female Black school counselors as a result of systematic racism that has been ignored by society and feared by members of the Black community (Henderson & Louis, 2017), as well as issues with the school-to-prison pipeline line which affects more Black students than any other race of individuals (Skiba, Horner, Chung, Rausch, Ma & Tobin (2011), and cultural expectations that exist from the Black community puts additional pressure and stressors on female Black school counselors. This additional pressure can be problematic given the nature of the work school counselor do with students and findings that point to how school counselors affect student

outcomes significantly across all domains: academic; personal/social, and career (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010).

Problem Statement

School counselors experience high levels of job stress due to role confusion resulting in lower levels of job satisfaction (Rayle, 2006). Additionally, research points to school counselors being expected to perform duties that are not within their scope of perceived responsibilities (Benigno, 2017). Specifically, female Black school counselors assume a role when working with Black students that is juxtaposed to their White counterparts. Interestingly, Moss and Singh (2015) suggested that White School counselors become racial justice allies to students of Color while also being mindful of how their own identity development including in what ways White privilege can impact their interactions with students of Color.

The present research is intended to give voice to female Black school counselors' experiences while exploring commonalities in their ideologies and practices of working with students of Color. The problem of practice within school counseling has surfaced as a serious concern following the instances of racial discrimination imposed on Black men, women, and children in United States' (US) society. The secondary trauma experienced in the Black community when racial injustices are reported has an impact and places undue stress upon the Black community to protect and nurture "their own." Thus, the emotional responses to these injustices can impact and/or impose a greater level of responsibility on female Black school counselors to help Black students become academically successful and to reduce and/or mitigate possible racial injustices. Owens, Lacey, Rawls, and Holbert-Quince (2010) suggested that having a "higher level of education provides better opportunities for greater income and the potential of career advancement" (p. 292). To provide better opportunities for all students, female

Black school counselors may assume additional cultural pressure to prevent Black students from becoming statistics by giving them tools and promoting academic success. The following vignette, which I created as part of completing coursework for my doctorate, illustrates this additional cultural pressure.

I have two sons who are 16 and 12 years old and two daughters, 8 and 2 years of age. I remember when I sat in the doctor's office with my oldest son for a routine checkup and the doctor, who was Black looked at me and said, "Have you had *the talk* with him yet?" I then looked at her and said, "Not yet." The doctor goes on to say, "Do you mind if I do this now?" After getting approval, the doctor says to him, "Do you know what is going on in our communities? Do you know what to do if and when you may be pulled over by a cop, profiled, or suspected of having done something wrong?" The knots in my stomach began to turn as I thought about how some people, including those of the law, may see my sweet boy. It was at this moment that I knew times changed and it was no longer about a routine service at a doctor's office. This young Black doctor was compelled to care and to speak up to possibly help save another Black life" (Researcher's self-reflection 2019, March 19).

Social injustices that have caused national outrages can have an impact on how female Black school counselors perceive their role when working with Black students. Vera, Buhin, and Shin (2006) defined social justice as when distribution of and access to resources are "equitable and all members of society are physically and psychologically safe" (p. 271). In a related vein, Bryant-Davis and Ocampo (2005) argued that racism and social injustices can cause psychological trauma parallel to that of physical violence. "Until the existence and impact of racist incident-based trauma are recognized, healing cannot take place" (p. 295).

When female Black school counselors work with Black students, it is this researcher's assumption that the secondary trauma from social injustices may cause additional burnout and role confusion. For example, the tragic shooting death of unarmed teenager Travon Martin in 2012 who was gunned down because he appeared suspicious, or the apparent race motivated murder of Ahmaud Arbery in the spring of 2020, a Black man running in his coastal Georgia neighborhood who was gunned down by two White men who thought he looked suspicious are

both internalized and part of a history of racial injustice. The historical aspects of such injustices are a part of the collective memory of Black folk in the US. How this impacts female Black school counselors is a question that has yet to be answered.

Tangentially, some research exists that supports this notion of female Black school counselors experiencing additional pressures as they perform their role. For instance, Guiffrida and Douthit (2010) supported the notion that Black students face challenges beyond academic preparation and that school counselors are in a unique position to, and can improve upon how, they prepare Black students for the college. In tandem, Farmer-Hinton and Adams (2006) purported that school counselors who serve in schools with more Black students than White students are not allowed the organizational capacity to provide adequate school counseling services to Black students, which is also impacted by school counselors engaging in non-school counselor tasks such as testing and scheduling courses. In this 2006 study, the role of school counselor role changes to assist Black students in overcoming racial disparities was addressed.

Farmer-Hinton & Adams (2006) wrote:

Limited college access for Black students is an important issue, since gaining admittance into college is a highly competitive process and an important step for self-sufficiency that leads to economic stability and mobility. Yet, a notable difference is that these counselors were also responsible for creating new norms of college access for a student population with limited experience and knowledge about college as a viable option. Thus, their role was to convince students, who were predominantly first-generation college-bound, that they could attend college. They used both formal and institutional means as well as informal and interpersonal communication. In a social and economic context in which adults' educational opportunities have been constrained, counselors see their role as not only helping students with their varied social and personal problems, but also using that familiarity to help students envision a future outside of the economic limitations of their local context (p. 113).

Similar to Farmer-Hinton & Adams (2006), for counselors working with Black male students, it may be worthwhile to provide special support and a nurturing surrounding to assist this group to have more academic success and move toward graduation (Owens et al., 2010). Further, because

of the pressures and limitations placed on Black male students such as peer influence, financial barriers, and access to proper resources, it is vital for counseling professionals to create an accepting and nurturing environment (Cuyjet, 1997). An academic environment that is welcoming and supportive for African American men is pivotal (Fleming, 1984). In doing so, it is the researcher's opinion that female Black school counselors incur cultural pressure while navigating school counselor role confusion.

The majority of school counselors in the US are women; because many women balance multiple roles including family, relationships, parenting, and community activities and personal endeavors, school counselors are vulnerable to increased levels of fatigue and negative mental health scores (Bryant & Constantine, 2006). With the addition of school counseling duties that involve providing counseling and guidance to students, it is likely that women school counselors experience more role discrepancy than male professionals, and mix personal and professional duties resulting in not only decreased levels of job satisfaction but life satisfaction (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). A specific study of this phenomenon of how female Black school counselors experience role ambiguity, role confusion, and cultural pressures, this proposed study may yield insight into role confusion and job burnout among a select group of female Black school counselors in public schools in southern Louisiana.

This section introduced issues such as school counselor role ambiguity, role confusion challenges, and specific cultural pressures brought to bear among Black school counselors. In addition, the need for such a proposed study was sufficiently presented. This next section details definitions for the role of school counselors.

A Brief Review of School Counselor Roles

Since its inception, there are numerous definitions for the role of school counselors. School counselors, formerly known as guidance counselors', originally supported students with college applications and job placement. These tasks expanded to include mental health and leadership in education (DeKruyf, Auger & Trice-Black, 2013). Trolley (2011) assert that the roles and expectations of school counselors vary across states, school districts, and schools perpetuating low uniformity in the school counseling profession. The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) set forth role statements for school counselors which formulates "Professional school counselors are certified/licensed educators with the minimum of a master's degree in school counseling and are uniquely qualified to address the developmental needs of all students through a comprehensive school counseling program addressing the academic, career and personal/social development of all students" (ASCA, 2011). The role of school counseling is clearly defined; however, school counselors assume tasks, mostly assigned by school administrators (Beesley & Frey, 2006).

School counselor roles functions within a school is hinged upon the school administrator's knowledge and understanding of appropriate school counselor duties (Sink, 2005). School counseling in its early years focused on student achievement in the context of occupational placement and eventually shifted to include mental health as part of student success (Bardhoshi & Duncan, 2009). The change from guidance counselor which focused on vocational success to school counselor, with the addition of mental health, redefined the field of school counseling with an emphasis on school counselors having a specific set of skills to address multiple domains: academic, personal/social and career concerns (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Bardhoshi & Duncan, 2009; DeKruyf, Auger & Trice-Black, 2013). Considering the roles of

school counselors historically and presently, the researcher presumes that it is important to consider the school counseling profession's demographics in hopes to provide a fair presentation of the current study. For a review of the history of school counseling, see Figure 1.

For Black women, cultural orientation can play a significant role in understanding and assuming their professional identities and roles in education (Cozart & Price, 2005). The experiences of Black female school counselors are relevant and warrant examination as much of the research regarding school counseling and role confusion are examinations of predominantly White female school counselors (Hatch, Poynton, & Perusse, 2015). Since public schools in southern Louisiana predominantly enroll students of Color, an examination of the school counselors who serve Louisiana's elementary and secondary students and are culturally similar to public school students in rural Louisiana is both timely and important. The increased scrutiny of school counselors' roles and their perceptions of their role in education in such environs led me to this study.

Research Questions

Specifically, the following questions guided this study:

- (R1) How do female Black school counselors perceive their role when working with Black students?
- (R2) How do female Black school counselors explain how to cope with role confusion and burnout caused by cultural expectations along with multiple role expectations from administration, teachers, students, and parents? And
- (R3) How do cultural expectations co-mingle, blend, and merge with their perceived role of a school counselor?

To situate these questions and this proposed study, it was important to examine the history and evolution of school counselors as educators and their roles in schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this multiple case study (Stake, 2013; Yin, 2003) is to explore the perceptions of a select group of female Black school counselors and how they cope with cultural expectations amid the role confusion and burnout that currently exist within the school counseling profession, particularly in urban schools. Existing research suggests increased burnout and role ambiguity in the context of a school counselor's professional identity (Nassar-McMillan, Karvonen, Perez, & Abrams, 2009) with little focus on cultural differences. This study intends to bring awareness about the phenomenon experienced among female Black school counselors in urban schools in Louisiana.

Significance of the Study

Research has indicated that school counselors experience role confusion both in practice and professional identity (Chandle et al., 2018; Lieberman, 2004). With such role ambiguity stemming primarily from school counselors having non-counseling assignments, it is common for the professional school counselor to experience burnout, fatigue, and role confusion (Bryant & Constantine, 2006). Specifically, female Black school counselors can be considered at higher risks because of cultural expectations and maintaining the collective identity and duty of assuming responsibility for overall well-being of Black students, and for "the culture." This mentality is observable as unending and contributes to increased role confusion, stress, and poor boundaries for female Black school counselors while working with Black students. The female Black school counselor's experience can shed light on the impact of role ambiguity for a vulnerable population within the school counseling profession.

Definition of Terms

Specific terms will be used throughout this proposed study. For the purposes of this study, the following terms were selected as germane to understanding this study.

African American. African Americans are an ethnic group of those residing in the US who claim a total or partial ancestry from any of the Black racial groups of Africa. The phrase generally refers to descendants of enslaved Black people who are currently from the US. Reverend Jesse Jackson is credited with the term, first used after the 1988 US presidential election and his Common Ground-Common Sense speech (Baugh, 1991; Martin, 1991; Sullivan, 1993).

American School Counselor Association (ASCA). The American School Counselor Association is a professional organization whose members have extensive training in counseling skills adapted to the school setting (Cinotti, 2014; ASCA 2019). In addition to giving school counselors a professional identity, ASCA serves as a framework to guide the practices of K-12 school counselors by providing clarified roles and duties of school counselors.

Black. As a racial term, Black refers to anyone with historical ethnic ties to Africa. For example, a Jamaican is considered Black, but not African American (Anonymous, 1989; Ghee, 1990; Martin, 1991). For the purposes of his study, I am electing to use the term Black; however, when cited research uses the term African American, that usage will be retained to preserve the words of an author.

Black Feminist Thought. Collins (2016) defined Black feminist thought as an intersecting power relation of race, gender, class, sexuality, age, ability, ethnicity, religion, and nationality, consisting of ideas that clarify a perspective of and for Black women (p. 135). Black

Feminist Thought assumes that Black women possess a unique standpoint of their experiences and that there will be certain commonalities of perception shared by Black women as a group.

Burnout. A state of emotional, mental, and often physical exhaustion brought on by prolonged or repeated stress—is not simply a result of working long hours (*Psychology Today*, 2020).

Cultural expectations. La Roche and Christopher (2009) defined cultural expectations as common ways in which individuals understand and develop the meaning of themselves and their worlds. “Members of the same culture share similar knowledge, values, beliefs, rituals, customs and history” (p. 260), creating a shared sense of identity.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs serves as a fundamental theory of personal motivation. The five human needs, presented in hierarchical order from the most basic to the most advanced, are physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualization and each need has to be fulfilled completely in order for an individual to progress to the next level (Sadri & Bowen, 2011).

Role Confusion. As defined by Edwards (2010) & Lambie (2002), role confusion is when an individual lacks information about his or her work role and or function. It involves the absence of clarity regarding work objectives and role expectations resulting in role ambiguity and or confusion.

School Counselor. School counselors are certified and/or licensed educators who improve the success of all students by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program to improve student outcomes. School counselors hold a minimum of a master’s level education, meet state certification for licensing standards, fulfill continuing education requirements, and uphold ASCA ethical and professional standards (ASCA, 2019).

School Counselor Role Conflict. “Role conflict occurs when school counselors experience multiple external demands from a variety of stakeholders (i.e., administrators, parents, teachers, and students). As a result, school counselors experience job stress from competing externally imposed demands, each exerting pressure on school counselors’ limited time and resources” (Holman, Nelson, & Watts, 2019, p. 128).

Summary

This chapter presents the need for the current study as well as a brief overview of the role ambiguity and role confusion of school counselors. In Chapter 2, a literature review is presented that examines extant literature on training, roles, evolving expectations, and self-perceptions of school counselors. Review of literature that addresses burnout and misalignment of counselor roles are also included in chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The proverb “It takes a village to raise a child” has its roots and beginnings in Africa. It comes from the Nigerian Igbo culture and proverb, *Oran a azu nwa*” which means it takes a community or village to raise a child (ngopulse.org). This proverb has permeated Black communities and I witnessed the dedication of such origins growing up. As a child, I experienced members of the Black community assisting in providing guidance and instilling morals. It was important to both parents and the village to participate in this effort to fill in the gaps in parenting, education, and moral character, juxtaposed to African American children not having enough support to level the playing field with their counterparts. Former Secretary of State and politician, Hilary Rodham Clinton, popularized this proverb and may have brought it to the mainstream in her 1996 book *It Takes A Village*.

Introduction

This literature review examines literature germane to the current study and explores the following topics: training, roles, evolving expectations, and self-perceptions of school counselors, burnout, and misalignment of counselor roles. Female Black school counselors’ perceptions on cultural expectations embedded within their school counseling practices and burnout will be explored through the lens of role confusion as it relates to school counselor duties, school counselor self-efficacy, and/or self-perception. While conducting this review, I removed the restriction of the publication date and narrowed the research to include only publications that reported empirical research on the role of school counselor within the school counselor ranks. I used the following criteria to select studies for review:

- Research content that focused on the origins of school counseling.

- The guidelines for certifying and training school personnel for guidance and counseling.
- School counselor and role confusion.
- African American women and cultural expectations
- Black women and mothering
- Research studies that included book chapters, articles, and dissertations that focused on the impact of burnout on school counselor self-efficacy.
- Studies that explored the evolutions of a comprehensive school counseling program as defined by the American School Counseling Association.

To collect and examine dissertations, articles, and journals, I conducted electronic searches from 2005 to 2019 in the following databases: Elton B. Stephens Co. (EBSCO), Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I, Academic Search Complete, Educational Administration Abstracts, Human Resources Abstract, Teacher Reference Center, SocINDEX with Full Text, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, Professional Development Collection, and Google Scholar. Additionally, I accessed peer reviewed journals to explore current research in the fields. The following publications were accessed: *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *Professional School Counseling*, *Journal of School Counseling*, and *The Educational and Developmental Psychologist*.

For the purpose of this study, role conflict and/or confusion is defined as the co-occurrence of two or more role pressures so much that alignment with one role makes it more difficult to align with the other (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011, p.4). Lieberman (2004) postulated that the roles of school counselors are vague and filled with ambiguity, and the more

school counselors undertake non-counselor duties such as clerical, administrative, and disciplinarian work, the less effective they will be in their school counselor role. The consequences of role confusion and/or ambiguity for school counseling practices results in lower levels of self-efficacy, decreased time to perform actual counseling functions that support positive student outcomes (DeMato & Curcio, 2004), increased stress levels (Coll & Freeman, 1997; Sears & Navin, 2001), high burnout and job turnover due to excessive non-counseling assignments (Baker & Gerler, 2004), and reduced job performance (Culbreth & Scarborough, Banks-Johnson & Solomon, 2005). One of the issues of role confusion among school counselors is the numerous definitions for the role of school counselors. Educational stakeholders also develop their descriptions of school counselors' roles and thus school counselors seem to have endless roles and duties that can be altered depending on the state, administration, and/or school needs (Trolly, 2011).

The burnout and role ambiguity experienced within the counseling profession has contributed to burnout and stress for school counselors – impacting school counselor's self-efficacy (Gunduz, 2012). Additionally, the experiences of female Black school counselors are worth exploring to investigate if higher rates of burnout and role conflict are reported based on the “strong Black woman” concept and cultural expectations.

The findings of this proposed study may help bring awareness to the school counseling profession and to educational stakeholders on the impact of role conflict because of being assigned non-counseling duties, and the resulting emotional stress experienced specifically among female Black school counselors. The findings of this study may also highlight the need for graduate training programs to address school counselor burnout and the cultural differences that may exist. Additionally, the proposed study may impact school administrators'

acknowledgement and understanding of the benefit to school counselors of having clearly identified roles to decrease the consequences of their stress and role conflict.

The current ASCA model consists of four interconnected components: the foundation, the delivery system, the management system, and accountability. “Specifically, the delivery system component of the ASCA National Model includes school counseling interventions that directly serve students such as the guidance curriculum, individual student planning and responsive, group-based services” (ASCA, 2003, 2005). ASCA (2003) defines each one of these components in the following manner: Individual student planning focuses on activities that assist developing life and career plans based on their skills and abilities; responsive services are activities that meet the immediate needs and concerns of students; school counseling curriculum that provides students with content, aligned with state standards for scope sequence and usually address matters such as organization skills, test taking strategies, career planning, social skills, and multicultural awareness; and finally system support which consists of management activities, engaging the school counseling in professional development and training. With so many duties and evolving roles, school counselors across the nation perform various tasks depending on the principals’ perception of school counselors’ duties, personal roles assumed by the school counselor, and other educational stakeholder’s expectations. Research indicated that other factors in school counselor role confusion are affected by the misalignment of school counselor roles (Ernst, Bardhoshi, & Lanthier, 2017).

Commonly, school counselors experience excessive stress, which is attributed to supplementary work demands. Pyne (2011) posited that professional school counselors reported high rates of burnout than others in the mental health profession. Bodenhorn & Skaggs (2005) introduced the notion that the delivery of school counseling interventions is more effective

when school counselors experience high self-efficacy regarding their job-related duties. School counselors who are tasked with non-related counseling duties have decreased levels of self-efficacy that can contribute to low self-esteem and emotional stability (Judge & Bono, 2001). Another study discussed that school counselors cannot adequately focus on improving students' academic achievement and promote appropriate post-secondary options partly because of their impossibly broad role (Carey & Martin, 2015). In the context of role ambiguity mentioned in this current study, the researcher suppose female Black school counselors may shift toward a cultural identity to assist in coping with the existing role confusion.

Female Black school counselors face additional identity constructs such as a collective identity that is developed within the African American community (Murrell, 2015). African Americans face the task of maintaining a collective identity while preserving the culture and obligation to the African American community (West, 1992); the obligation to the African American or Black community can be defined as identified Blackness. The protection and the internal criteria required for how Blackness looks and what it means can impact a person's sense of identity (Shelby, 2005). Thus, female Black school counselors are not exempt from the "It takes a village" mindset. In fact, it may be possible that this particular subset of school counselors juggle the roles and duties set forth by the ASCA, the roles and duties perceived by administration, teachers, students and parents, and assume the cultural expectations to maintain the well-being of "our own" and or Black students. As a school counselor, I offer these assumptions as a need for such a study.

The proposed research questions may help those in the counseling field, myself as a counselor included, to understand how female Black school counselors perceive their role in the counseling profession while adhering to and maintaining a "It takes a village" role when working

with Black students, and how they cope with conflict and burnout. Research question one addresses how female Black school counselors define their work with Black students and can clarify whether cultural expectations are seen in the work of school counselors and if they are internal stressors. Research questions one and two deal with the problem of how female Black school counselors cope with role conflict and burnout.

Origins of School Counseling

Since its beginning in the early 1900s, school counseling has evolved from the term “vocational guidance”, which included roles that resembled modern day career counseling with a focus on a transition from education to employment (ASCA, 2004). Initially, classroom teachers provided guidance to students for their social, personal, and vocational needs (Coleman, 2011) as only individuals with a teaching credential were able to become school counselors after completing some additional coursework (Randolph & Masker, 1997). During the Industrial Revolution, the counseling field grew to focus on employment and vocational aspirations; as a response to this need, educators and social activists suggested programs and services to help students with their development (Schmidt, 2008). Known as “The Father of Guidance,” Frank Parsons is credited for his contribution for the institutionalization of guidance counseling because of his work as a social worker who focused on out of school youth and their transitions into relatable vocational placement (Schmidt, 2003). Following the vocational and guidance movement, an initiative among educators, social workers, and psychometrics in vocational guidance led to the development of the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) in 1913 (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). The NVGA merged with the American College Personnel Association, the National Association of Guidance Supervisors and Counselor Trainers, and the Student Personnel Association for Teacher Education, and became the American Personnel and

Guidance Association (APGA), which is today the American Counseling Association (ACA) that eventually established school counseling as a profession (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Schmidt, 2003). During the 1920s, John Dewey (1963) introduced the cognitive developmental movement and guidance and counseling no longer included just vocational guidance but introduced guidance strategies into the curriculum designed to support student development and achievement.

Major Models of School Counseling	Vocational Guidance	Mental Health Movement	Developmental Guidance	Comprehensive Competency Based School Counseling Guidance Programs
Period	1900-1940's	1950's – 1960's	1960's – 1980's	1990's – 2000's
Role	Match a student's personal characteristics with an occupation <u>Goals include</u> assist students in finding a career	Provide remedial services. <u>Goals include</u> help close achievement gaps, especially culturally diverse, low-income, English language learners, and differing ability children	Primary prevention focus. Integrate guidance and counseling program within the larger educational program <u>Goals include</u> increase student achievement, provide more equitable services to students, broader impact on student development and career decision making, student satisfaction, & safe, orderly, connected school climate	Integral to student's daily educational environment. <u>Goals include</u> partner and leader in student achievement with school stakeholders, providing vocational, remedial, and developmental interventions based on student data.
Training	Training in assessment of occupational selection and placement for all students	Training in prevention & intervention skills to close achievement gaps	Training focuses on identifying the developmental needs of students to meet the diverse needs of students	Multicultural training that encourages school counselors to advocate for the academic achievement of all students.

Figure 1. “Timeline of the School Counseling Movement. The ASCA (2005) National Model incorporates these various roles into its framework” (Wingfield, Reese, & West-Olatunji, 2010, p. 116).

Prior to the 1960's, school counseling was limited to high schools (Myrick, 2003), which led to the National Defense Education Act to train elementary and middle school counselors (Wittmer & Adorno, 2000). Developmental guidance at all levels began focusing on preventative and proactive approaches to school counseling that could reach as many students as possible (Myrick, 2003). The Educational Act for All Handicapped Children of 1975 increased the services school counselors provided (ASCA, 2004). The bill mandated that schools provide free public education for all children with an emphasis on equity for exceptional children (Baker, 2000). This shift brought the development of what we know today as the Comprehensive School Counseling Program. As the understanding of school counseling expanded, the need for mental health in addition to vocational services became obvious (Basken & Slaten, 2014). Along with the expansion of school counseling services, ASCA established school counselor role statements and attempted to define the role, functions, and responsibilities of school counselors.

Impact of School Counselor Role Confusion

Many counselors are assigned inappropriate counselor related tasks such as lunch supervision, student discipline, paperwork, and test administration (ASCA, 2012; Bardhosi, Schweinle, & Duncan, 2014; Edwards, Grace, & King, 2014), in part because school principals and district administrators are misinformed about appropriate counselor roles (Graham, Desmond, & Zinsser, 2011). The consequences of varying degrees of school counselors' functions include inadequate counseling services offered to students and other educational stakeholders. The dissimilarity of counselor roles is a problem on national and state levels, particularly when indicators suggest school counselors should incorporate more initiatives to support the success of students (Lowery, Quick, Boyland, Geesa, & Mayes, 2018). Although national role standards indicate which tasks are considered appropriate to the role (ASCA, 2003),

there is a widespread perception that such role statements are not always followed (Baker & Gerler, 2004; Schiarra, 2004). The extant research posits that school counselors in many cases are deemed as educators and counselors which Cinotti (2014) described as a conflicting identity in the profession. Adding to this role conflict, school counselors often balance different job expectations from multiple stakeholders (Culbreth, Scarborough, Banks-Johnson, & Solomon, 2005).

Although the literature (Lieberman, 2004; Chandler et al., 2018; Bardhosi et al., 2014; Paolini & Tapdemir, 2013; Gibson, Dooley, Kelchner, Moss, & Vacchio, 2012) clearly highlighted the assignment of non-counseling duties and its impact on school counselor self-efficacy (Bodenhorn, Wolfe, & Airen, 2010; Owens, Bodenhorn & Bryant, 2010; Gunduz, 2012), there is a paucity of research stemming from the lived experiences of the female Black school counselor. Role confusion and burnout continue to be issues in the school counseling profession that consists of vague job descriptions and duties (Zalaquett, 2005). The American Counselor Association (2012) highlights the skills and scope of practice for school counselors.

Despite the efforts of ASCA, the Louisiana Model for School Counselors, and the Louisiana State Department of Education fail to clarify best practices for school counselor job duties, counselors at all levels of education (elementary, middle, and high school) are assigned tasks from administration, essentially defining their role despite education and training. Not only the school counselor's perspective of their role but the principal's perception of the school counselor's standard of practice adds to an increase in role conflict.

Carnes-Holt, Range, and Cisler (2012) asserted that school principals' understanding of the school counselor's role is more important than other stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and or students. School counselors must be supported and understood by administration to

minimize school counselor role confusion and to function effectively in the role of a school counselor. Slaten and Werriden (2018) suggested that the school counseling profession received a “boost in legitimacy on a national level through the Obama Administration and the Reach Higher initiative” (p. 25). Although school counselors received more national attention, the profession continues to lack organization, as school counselors in the same district can offer different services to students based on the administration’s perception of the school counseling role or, more so, the school counselor’s perception of role and responsibilities (Scott, 1992).

Mullin and Crowe (2017) conducted a study, sampling 333 practicing school counselors to investigate the relationship between school counselor’s satisfaction with life, burnout, stress, help-seeking behaviors, and self-stigma. The study discovered school counselors may struggle with feelings of burnout and job dissatisfaction (Mathews, 2012). Harnois (2014) suggested that school counselors may risk being in danger of burnout and should “seek mental health support to ensure stressors do not become larger mental health issues” (Mullin & Crowe, 2017, p. 407).

Bardhoshi, Schweinle, and Duncan (2014) initiated a study with 252 school counselors and established a significant relationship between school counselor burnout and non-counselor duties, lack of principal support, lack of organizational support, negative school environment, lack of resources, and lack of time. “Feeling of longing to do some other job due to stress, difficulty coping with demands, paperwork, lack of support, lack of input, or other long-term difficulties on the job” (p. 433) supported the overall qualitative theme of the study. A Counselor Burnout Inventory (CBI), a 20-item instrument was designed to measure burnout in professional counselors. The demographics were White (78.6%), with Black and Hispanic representing a combined total of (7.9%) of the participant population. Participants reported poor boundaries between work and personal life (Bardhoshi, Schweinle, and Duncan, 2014). The researcher

believes the participant demographics and the results found from the CBI are relative to the proposed study, reaffirming that most of the research conducted in the field of school counseling consists of majority White school counselors. Further, investigations from the experiences of female Black school counselors are faint to non-existent. School counselors in the study emphasized the importance of administrator support and when absent, contributes to school counselor burnout.

Administrative Perspective on the Role of School Counselors

Comprehensive School Counseling (CSC) programs are designed for school counselors to better support the school's mission (ASCA, 2017b; DeSimone & Roberts, 2016). School administrators should be cognizant of the significance of CSC programs to ensure that school counselors' responsibilities are supported with data and students have the potential to access school counselors (Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007). Lowery, Quick, Boyland, Geesa & Mayes, 2018) study involved 38 principals and 49 assistant principals of whom 60% were male and 40% were female. The study found that school administrators agreed the "role of the counselor was an area that was missing from principal preparation that would have better prepared our graduates to effectively collaborate with the school counselor for role assignment, hiring, and evaluation" (p. 20).

Researchers (Armstrong, MacDonald & Stillo, 2010; Durlak & Geier, 2016) supposed that school principals have major influence on the work of professional school counselors and often determine the role they will assume in their building by assigning tasks and duties (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Durlak & Geier, 2016). School administrator's support and application of the vision established for the role of a school counselor are necessary to create a collaborative effort that facilitates clear roles for both the school administrator and school counselor (Cisler & Bruce,

2013). School principals and their relationship with school counselors can create further role conflict in the daily practices school counselor. Counselors at all levels of education (elementary, middle, and high school) are assigned their tasks from administration, which essentially defines their role despite their education and training.

Zalaquett (2005) conducted a study of 500 principals and supposed elementary counselors have a positive impact on the mental health of students and should work with families, teachers, and administrators to support a positive school environment. Inconsistently, Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan & Jones (2004) posited that elementary school principals observed the function of elementary school counselors should consist of test administration, record keeping, and additional duties in the principal's office. Middle school counselors believe lack of administrative support can make the connection between roles and tasks more difficult (Armstrong, MacDonald, & Stillo, 2010). Zalaquett and Chatters (2012) investigated the perceptions of 190 middle school principals on the role of middle school counselors and discovered middle school principals assume counselors should focus on individual counseling; small group counseling; classroom guidance; consulting with parents; crisis counseling; consulting with teachers; coordinating intervention services; and consulting with administrators (p. 95). Meanwhile, Leuwerke, Walker, and Shi (2009) reported that principals consider the primary functions of school counselors, some within the high school setting, as registration, testing, record keeping, and discipline. It appears school principals are a large influence on the daily functions of school counselors and as a result contribute to more school counselor role confusion.

Herrington & Ross (2006) disagrees with the aforementioned literature that school principals are responsible for the vast amount of school counselor role confusion by arguing

school counselors have contributed to their own role confusion by failing to define their role and by settling for ambiguous job descriptions and duties. Sears and Granello (2002) contends that school principals and teachers are confused by the term “guidance counselor” or “school counselor” and it is the profession of school counseling who is responsible for the confusion because the lack of consistency in titles, roles, and training.

An Historical Overview of School Counselor Training: Then versus Now

At its beginning in the early 1900s, school counseling was different from the current functions advocated by the ASCA (2004) professional role statement. The term employed during the early 1900s for the profession was vocational guidance, “which involves roles that were similar to modern career counseling with a focus on the transition from school to work, emphasizing an appropriate client occupational placement match” (Lambie & Williamson, 2004, p. 124-125).

Originally, the school counseling movement began with the influence of Frank Parsons who founded the Boston Vocational Bureau in 1909, which focused on assisting youth choose a vocation and eventually found its way into public schools (Schmidt, 2003; Baskin & Slaten, 2014). The school counselor was a role extension of the schoolteacher with the purpose of providing some vocational guidance for a student to choose a career (Brown & Lent, 2004). School counselor selection pathways began with a technique described by Galassi and Akos (2004) where there were more than 75 class counselors in secondary schools to ensure wise choices. The plan involved a "selection through tryout" in which candidates had to serve as subject matter teachers so that their qualifications might be evaluated. “Important selection criteria included (a) better than average skill as subject matter teachers, (b) successful pupil-

teacher and (c) teacher-teacher relationships, (d) skills in record keeping and research, and (e) a professional attitude that "approaches the zeal of the missionary or of the minister" (p. 71).

Rogers, the "Father of Counseling", has been deemed the greatest contributor to the development of the counseling profession due to his work and his book *Counseling and Psychotherapy: New Concepts in Practice* (Rogers, 1942; Schmidt, 2003). Rogers introduced guidance and counseling with the idea that counselors are considered companions and should help clients move toward self-actualization (DeCarvalho 1990; Cobia & Henderson, 2003). Rogers encouraged counselors to concentrate more on the mental health needs of students (Schmidt, 1999). The tenets of school counseling were strengthened in 1952 with the formation of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), which became a member of the APGA in 1953 and "provided the profession of school counseling with professional development strategies, research, resources, and advocacy promoting the profession's identity" (Wingfield, Reese, & West-Olatunji, 2010; Baker, 2000). Following vocational guidance to the inclusion of the mental health movement, school counseling expanded beyond high school to middle and elementary settings and the school counselor's role expanded to include developmental counseling (Cinotti, 2014; Wingfield, et al., 2010).

At the time of this study, in the state of Louisiana, the certification of school counselors consists of, "official transcripts showing the completion of a master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university; completion of coursework required for school counselor; counseling practicum completed in a school setting NOTE: Applicants enrolling into a Master's Degree Program in School Counseling after July 1, 2015, must complete a Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP); meet practicum/internship requirements and successfully pass the Praxis School Counselor (0421 or

5421) exam” (Kaye, 2012, p. vii). The Louisiana School Counseling Model (2010) indicates that the most effective school counseling program provides a comprehensive counseling curriculum that addresses three domains: academic, career, and personal/social. This model defines the work of school counselors as providing services and programs to assist students in academic planning, resolving emotional, social, or behavioral problems, and to develop a more precise focus or sense of direction (p. 5-10).

School counselors are now taking a holistic approach to helping students that shares a different perspective than the origin of school counseling that focused on vocational guidance (Brown & Lent, 2004). Some states (e.g., Louisiana) have dropped the teaching certification requirement, recognizing school counseling as a separate profession that requires specialized training (ASCA, 2009; Paisley & Hubbard, 1989). Some states have passed legislation to make school counseling a license with specific requirements such as passing the Praxis II specialty area test for school counseling, in addition to coursework in school counseling (ASCA, 2012; Lum, 2003).

Another change from the traditional training of school counselors is the addition of school counselors as school leaders. School counselors taking on leadership roles within the schools and working systemically to help all students succeed (DeVoss & Andrews, 2006) is a new vision first articulated by the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (McMahon, Mason & Paisley, 2009). This new vision was further articulated through the creation of the ASCA National Model® (2005), which applies skills of leadership, collaboration, systemic change, advocacy, and use of data within the foundation of a comprehensive, developmental program. In addition, it was hypothesized that school counselors would need to use skills not traditionally

associated with counseling programs to create systemic change necessary including advocacy, collaboration, the use of data, and leadership skills (House & Hayes, 2002).

Professional school counselors have been asked to embrace a new vision of leadership within the school environment, which not only demands that they expand their skills set but also embrace a new philosophical position (Paisley & Milsom, 2006). To initiate this change, school counselor educators must embrace the new vision and adequately prepare professional school counselors (PSCs) to work from the new vision (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). According to Ford & Nelson (2007), school counselors have been trained as mental health providers and student advocates and may not identify under the many expected roles from administration and other stakeholders.

Role Ambiguity

Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack (2011) examined the relationship between role conflict, role ambiguity, and time spent on appropriate school counselor tasks and how they related to job satisfaction of high school counselors. In their study, The Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity Scale and the Job Descriptive Index were administered to 175 high school counselors; 88.6% were White, 6.9% were Black and the remaining participants selected Latino(a)/Hispanic or Other for ethnicity (p. 10). The study determined that role conflict was significant in predicting job satisfaction and that “multiple demands placed on high school counselors appear to create pressure to make decisions on what services to provide or how to provide all of them with finite resources and time” (p. 17).

Role ambiguity present in the school counseling profession results in school counselors having different perceptions of their roles in the school environment (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Role ambiguity exists when (a) an individual lacks information about his or her work role,

(b) there is a lack of clarity about work objectives associated with the role, or (c) there is a lack of clarity about peer expectations of the scope and responsibility of the job (Lambie, 2002, p. 84). School counselors and school administrators often share different perceptions regarding the role of the school counselor (Williamson, 2000) and the more school counselors accept tasks and responsibilities that do not fit their role, the more ambiguous their professional identity (Armstrong, MacDonald, & Stillo, 2010).

Appropriate activities for school counselors	Inappropriate activities for school counselors
Individual student academic program planning	Coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students
Interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests	Coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs
Providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent	Signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent
Providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems	Performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences
Providing counseling to students as to appropriate school dress	Sending students home who are not appropriately dressed
Collaborating with teachers to present school counseling core curriculum lessons	Teaching classes when teachers are absent
Analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement	Computing grade-point averages
Interpreting student records	Maintaining student records
Providing teachers with suggestions for effective classroom management	Supervising classrooms or common areas
Ensuring student records are maintained as per state and federal regulations	Keeping clerical records
Helping the school principal identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems	Assisting with duties in the principal's office
Providing individual and small-group counseling services to students	Providing therapy or long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders
Advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards	Coordinating school wide individual education plans, student study teams and school attendance review boards
Analyzing disaggregated data	Serving as a data entry clerk

Figure 2. ASCA National Model: Appropriate and Inappropriate Roles and Functions of School Counselors. The American School Counselor Association (2012) designed and published this set of appropriate and inappropriate activities.

Job stress can be an antecedent to burnout, and is characterized by experiencing high external demands with little control and low support often resulting from role ambiguity, role conflict, and work overload (Ganster, 2010). Additionally, school counselors experience high

levels of competing demands from many educational stakeholders (administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the profession itself) over which they have little control (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006).

Elementary School

The functions of elementary school counseling have a different focus from middle and secondary high school counseling. The primary functions of elementary school counseling are to address developmental challenges, social pressures, and to assist students in reaching their highest potential (Coll & Freeman, 1997). ASCA describes the role of the elementary school counselors as providing education, prevention, early identification, and intervention to help all children to increase academic achievement (ASCA, 1990). Elementary school counselors are involved in more activities related to discipline, parent and teacher consultation, and the coordination of academic, personal, and social services. The elementary school counselor will spend more of their time working with families, assisting teachers with classroom management and referral of students recommended for educational evaluations than middle and high school counselors (Hardesty & Dillard, 1994). It has also been noted that elementary school counselors experience more role confusion than their middle and high school counterparts due to the developmental lens from which they work, resulting in the expendable use of school counselors for a variety of duties (Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2008).

Middle School

ASCA (2012) defines the role of middle school counselors as:

A school counseling program based on the school's academic, attendance, and discipline data. Identifying student needs through this data and consulting with administrators to guide program development. Middle school counselors balance their program by addressing students' academic, career, and social/emotional development in addition to balancing delivery methods, recognizing that students learn in multiple ways. In Some cases, middle school counselors are involved with more discipline and testing

than high school and elementary school counselors. Middle school counselors should be “innovative school leaders, collaborative case consultants, responsive to direct service provider, and administrative team players” (Amatea & Clark, 2005, p. 19).

Remley & Albright (1988) found that teachers and students often see the middle school counselor as an alternative to administrative personnel because of the administrative duties they are assigned.

High School

According to ASCA (1990), high school counselors support students in obtaining personal growth, acquire positive social skills and values, set appropriate career goals and become aware of their full academic potential to become productive, contributing members in the society. By being burdened with paperwork, scheduling, and administrative tasks, high school counselors have been pulled away from spending more time on direct service activities (Partin, 1993).

At the high school level, school counselors are asked to assume a greater role in the lives of their students and their students’ families related to parenting, substance abuse prevention, teen pregnancy programs, suicide education, test-taking programs, and career and post-secondary planning (Sears, 1993, p. 386).

Cervoni (2007) suggested that the increase in school counselor responsibilities in the administrative, clerical, or teaching realm and time spent with students has radically decreased, and job satisfaction of school counselors may be impacted as a result.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs serves as a model of basic needs and/or deficiencies that, when met, can be a motivational tool for individuals (McLeod, 2007). The basic needs are: psychological, related to thirst and hunger; safety as it relates to security and stability; social, which speaks to having a sense of belonging; esteem, speaking of respect for self and others; and self-actualization, meaning to full a person’s full potential (Gawel, 1997). The movement

between the levels is such that when one need is fulfilled, a person seeks to fulfill the next one (McLeod, 2007). Female Black school counselors' perceptions of their role in relationship with cultural expectations, may not self-actualize with the misalignment of inappropriate school counseling tasks that are incumbent upon school counselors today. Role ambiguity may serve as barrier between school counselors experiencing a sense of belonging and self-esteem which are needed to reach maximal potential for both personal and professional growth.

Evolving Expectations of School Counselors

School counselors playing a vital role in promoting socio-emotional growth and the academic wellbeing of all students (DeSimone & Roberts, 2016) is seen and heard and generally accepted within the field of school counseling today. At its origin, however, the school counselor's role focused primarily on career counseling and employment matching (ASCA, 2004). When school counselors were no longer becoming certified as guidance counselors, but instead trained to address the mental health needs of students, teachers saw the role of a school counselor as primarily to address the social and or mental health needs of students in order to improve classroom management (Clark & Amatea, 2004).

Perkins, Oescher, and Ballard (2010) discussed an ongoing debate of whether school counselors should be considered as "educators first and school counselors second, or counselors first and educators second" (p. 3). The consistent shift in the school counseling role can be attributed to how school counseling originated – a response to a social and political necessity. It is not unlikely that the role of school counseling will continue to evolve with attention given to political trends (Gysbers, 2001; Perkins, Oescher, and Ballard, 2010) despite the attempts to clarify the role of school counselors and establish a professional identity.

The change from guidance counselors to school counselors was not favorably accepted by Hoyt (1993) who recommended school counselors be viewed as educators first (p. 271). The history of school counseling began with employing certified teachers to provide guidance to students for purposes of job placement (Baker, 1994). Hoyt (1993) concluded that possible role confusion for school counselors would be decreased if the profession would accept an “educator first, counselor second” identity in which he gave the following example:

Do teachers of high school chemistry consider themselves as chemists first and educators second? The binding of all disciplines in K-12 educators is their common concepts of themselves as educators, not members of specific academic disciplines. If counselors are to be truly accepted by their colleagues in K-12 school settings, they must expect to adopt this mindset. A counselor first mindset will bring on many difficulties in the school setting (p. 272).

Many school counselors hired in Louisiana are tasked with many roles and duties outlined by ASCA as well as the Louisiana Department of Education. The exhaustive list illustrates the teacher and or educator first identity, (see Figure 3 below).

Summary	Duties and Responsibilities	Coordination	School Improvement	Personal Traits:	Education and Experience
<p>The primary responsibility of the School Counselor shall be counseling students and providing those services directly related to that counseling. The School Counselor shall be responsible for the effective management of the school counseling department of the school to which assigned. The school counseling program shall be conducted in accordance with policies adopted by the Board of Education and with regulations and procedures of the district.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consults with appropriate personnel and/or agencies on behalf of the student. 	<p>Counseling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides individual counseling in a confidential setting. • Provides small group counseling sessions in a confidential setting • Provides activities and experiences for students to: • Develops a positive self-concept through an understanding of abilities, interests, and strengths. • Develops appropriate social skills. • Develops a positive attitude toward acceptable behavior at school, at home, and in the community. • Develops problem-solving skills. 	<p>Coordinates the testing program and interprets test scores.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates and disseminates information regarding graduation requirements and course descriptions, as appropriate. • Participates in orientation activities. <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and plans for individual differences. • Develops a written plan with clear and concise objectives for providing guidance services. • Plans effectively for instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes an active role in building-level decision making • Participates in grade-level/subject area curriculum planning and evaluations • Serves on task forces and decision making committees, when appropriate • Implements school improvement plan • Creates partnerships with parents/caregivers and colleagues • Provides clear and timely information to parents/caregivers and colleagues regarding classroom expectations, student progress, and ways they can assist learning. 	<p>Exhibits competency in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poise and self-confidence • Enthusiasm and optimism • Punctuality • Dependability • Flexibility • Acceptable speech and grammar • Effective communication with students, colleagues, parents, and other adults • Confidential and ethical handling of information regarding students acquired in the course of professional services • Openness in examining counselor techniques • Willingness to continue the development of counseling skills 	<p>The School Counselor must hold a valid Louisiana Teaching Certificate and must have completed three years of successful teaching experience at the assigned levels of Elementary and Secondary. Must hold Louisiana State Certification in Guidance and Counseling.</p> <p>Identifies the Components of Effective Teaching</p> <p>LANGUAGE SKILLS</p> <p>Ability to read, analyze, and interpret scientific and technical journals, financial reports, and legal documents.</p>

Figure 3. Louisiana School Counselor Job Description. Retrieved from Indeed (2020).

<https://www.indeed.com/q-School-Counselor-l-Louisiana-jobs.html?vjk=16db27407c863ac9>

(figure cont'd.)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides opportunities for administrators, teachers, and parents to discuss concerns related to students. • Maintains and fosters confidentiality in regard to information concerning students. • Participates in the School Building Level Committee/Building Level Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops career-related goals. • Maintains accurate, complete and correct records as related to counseling services. • Manages learner behavior to provide productive learning opportunities. • Maximizes the amount of time available for instruction. 	Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes appropriate precautions to protect students, equipment, materials, and facilities. • Maintains an environment conducive to learning. • Delivers instruction effectively. • Integrates technology into instruction. • Produces evidence of students' academic growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages parents/caregivers to become active partners in their children's education and to become involved in school and classroom. • Seeks community involvement in the instructional program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbiased attitude regarding race, sex, creed, religion, or disability • Willingness to implement recommendations Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assesses student progress. • Provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process. • Presents appropriate content. 	Ability to respond to inquiries or complaints. Ability to write speeches and articles for publication that conform to prescribed style and format. Ability to effectively present information to top management, public groups, and the school board.
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Although the profession has allowed for non-teachers to be trained and certified as school counselors, some states still require teaching experience as a certification requirement (Scoles, 2011), which creates more disunity within the profession. ASCA has attempted to clarify the roles for school counselors, yet some school counselors are being required to teach a subject area prior to becoming a certified school counselor and other school counselors are being trained as therapists upon entering K-12 schools.

Black Feminist Thought

While the roles and expectation and training of school counselors is important to review, with a proposed focus on female Black school counselors, a discussion of Black feminist thought is also germane to this study. Black feminist thought gives premise for understanding the social and historical circumstances of Black women in the US, and especially, provides an understanding of how their circumstances suggest central dilemmas and or conundrums, such as having their histories overlooked in discussions about women (Collins, 2016). In school

counseling, women make up the majority of the profession as reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics. It is apparent that the voices of Black women have been left out of school counselor research – this gap in the literature where the thoughts, perceptions, and experiences of this particular group has yet to be explored.

The work of Patricia Collins (1986) defines Black feminist thought based on three tenants and the first is that Black feminist thought can be defined as “ideas produced by Black women that clarify a standpoint of and for Black women” (p. s16). The definition suggests that in order to understand the perspectives of Black women, there must also be an understanding of the historical experiences that shape the lives of Black women (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). The second definition assumes that Black women possess a unique perspective of their experiences that can be agreed upon by other Black women as a whole (Collins, 1986).

Third, while living life as Black women may produce certain commonalities of outlook, the diversity of class, region, age, and sexual orientation shaping individual Black women's lives has resulted in different expressions of these common themes. Thus, universal themes included in the Black women's standpoint may be experienced and expressed differently by distinct groups of Afro-American women (Collins, 1989). Therefore, one role for Black female intellectuals is to produce facts and theories about the Black female experience that will clarify a Black woman's standpoint for Black women (Collins, 1986). In other words, Black feminist thought contains observations and interpretations about Afro-American womanhood that describe and explain different expressions of common themes (Collins, 1986, p. s14). Given the nuances of being a Black woman and school counselor and considering the issues of role ambiguity and role expectation, a review of school counselor burnout is necessary.

School Counselor Burnout

Moyer (2011) explored how “burnout affects school counselors when looking at the predictive qualities of student to-counselor-ratios, the amount of supervision received, and the number of hours spent on non-counseling activities” (p. 8). The research conducted included 382 school counselors who “52 (13.6%) were male, 325 (85.1%) were female, and 5 (1.3%) did not indicate their gender. The participants were predominantly White (n = 343, 89.8%). The remaining sample was comprised of African American (n = 20, 5.2%), Asian (n = 2, 0.5%), Hispanic (n = 8, 2.1%), and nine participants (2.4%) who did not indicate ethnicity” (p. 9). The results of the study indicated that “burnout (i.e. having feelings of incompetence, devaluing clients, feelings of exhaustion, seeing deterioration in their personal life, and feeling they are caught in a negative work environment) is often times not able to fulfill their job responsibilities” (p. 18) and was found to have a strong relationship with the time school counselors spent on inappropriate counselor tasks and increased student to counselor ratio. School counselors who engage in education and mental health together may be more vulnerable to burnout because of their job demands and unrelated school counselor tasks that may cause job dissatisfaction, work stress, and ineffective work performance (Moyer, 2011).

Kolodinsky, Draves, Schroder, Lindsey, and Zlatev (2009) described counselors as being overwhelmed and feeling unsettled due to excessive non-guidance related tasks that take away from their ability to address the personal and or social concerns with students. Historically, school counseling has had a perpetual “evolving role, including educator, staff support, administrator, scheduler, and testing coordinator (Slaten & Werriden, 2018, p. 13), resulting in the school counselors filling in multiple gaps in P-12 education, a situation that has led to burnout (Baskin & Slaten, 2014).

Burnout in school counseling affects school counselors at a higher risk than other mental health workers because of multiple job demands, role ambiguity, and limited role support (Nayoung & Lambie, 2018). School counselors report that low satisfaction is experienced when engaged in non-counselor tasks such as test coordination, clerical tasks, scheduling, and administrative duties, hindering quality services provided to students (Young & Lambie, 2007; Nayoung & Lambie, 2018).

Misalignment of School Counselor Roles

Lambie (2007) suggested that when school counselors spend more time on non-guidance duties, they are more likely to experience school counselor burnout. School administrators, teachers, parents, and school counselors themselves understand the school counselor roles and responsibilities differently (Burnham & Jackson, 2000). “As a result, many school counselors are assigned various unrelated tasks that may lead to frustration and resentment towards the working environment and the entire school system” (Moyer, 2011, p. 19).

Astramovich, Hoskins, Gutierrez, & Bartlett (2013) rallied that as differing school counseling models attempt to define the roles and responsibilities of school counselors, the field continues to be misunderstood. Some researchers believe that school administrators’ perception of appropriate duties of school counselors should be a priority (Amatea & Clark, 2005). Many school counselors are assigned non-counselor related tasks such as lunch supervision, student discipline, paperwork, and test administration (ASCA, 2012; Bardhosi et al., 2014), partly due to school principals and district administrators being unaware of appropriate counselor roles (Graham, Phelps, Maddison, and Fitzgerald, 2011). Some researchers argue that educational administrators are not lacking in knowledge of the school counselor’s role and responsibilities, but rather principals are tasked with fulfilling the needs of their schools as referenced by

Zalaquett (2005), who suggested the role and function of school counselors are determined by the principal, perpetuating role confusion of school counselors.

The misalignment of counselor roles is a problem on national and state levels, (Lowery et al., 2018). Although national role standards indicate which tasks are considered appropriate to the role (ASCA, 2003), there is a widespread perception that such role statements are not always followed (Baker & Gerler, 2004; Schiarra, 2004; Schmidt, 2003). Conflicting job duties yield even more confusion in the counseling profession because school counselors across the nation perform various tasks depending on the principals' perception of school counselor duties.

Most school counselor programs work extensively with teaching graduate students to follow the ASCA Model, which provides school counselors with well-defined structures to guide their counseling activities with students (ASCA, 2012). Given tasks unrelated to counseling, uncertainty and role confusion often occur as suggested by Ballard & Murgatroyd (1999), especially for those trained with the ASCA model. For this study, female Black school counselors are sourcing their cultural knowledge and experience to work with students, especially Black students, expanding their role confusion.

It Takes a Village Collective Identity

Murrell (2015) posited the Black “collective identity can be defined as a shared sense of “one-ness” or “we-ness” anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences among those who comprise the collectivity and in relation or contrast to one more actual or imagined sets of others” (p. 3). This study sought to explore how Black women experience Black collective identity and the impact it has on their psychological and emotional well-being (p. 6-7), as well as to address the long history of Black women protecting families, women, and communities against the pressures of racist domination (Murrell, 2015).

The intersecting oppression of racism for Black women and their work is worth exploring and should not be overlooked; this includes the work of female Black school counselors. Not only does racism play a part in how Black women perceive their identity in helping other members in the Black community but Thomas, Witherspoon, and Speight (2008) discovered a significant relationship between mental distress of Black women and their personal experiences of racism. hooks (1990) stated that Black women performed additional roles of resistance and acknowledged:

It was about the construction of a safe place where Black people could affirm one another and by so doing heal many of the wounds inflicted by racist domination. We could not learn to love or respect ourselves in the culture of white supremacy, on the outside; it was there on the inside, in that ‘homeplace,’ most often created and kept by Black women, that we had the opportunity to grow and develop, to nurture our spirits. This task of making a homeplace, of making home a community of resistance, has been shared by Black women globally, especially Black women in white supremacist societies (p. 42).

The Mother Teacher Identity

The work of Patricia Collins (2005) discussed the historical view of Black women’s role of motherhood within White and African American families. This study posited that the initial image of Black women as mothers was connected to the term described and known as “Mammy.” Mammy is defined as the faithful and devoted domestic servant who mothers’ White children by caring for them and loving them as their own all while accepting an inferior status. However, when she enters her own home, this same Mammy is seen as the strong matriarch who raises weak sons and unnaturally superior daughters. When Black women speak up, they are sometimes seen as aggressive or the angry Black woman (p. 316). Beauboeuf (2008) posited that “Mammy was a Black woman who knew her place of servitude and helped to regulate the behavior of other slaves through her discipline and example” (p. 4). Barbara Omolade (1994)

invented the term “mammification” to the mammy image but also the pressure for Black women to assume a status-reassuring respect to Whites in workplaces. Explains bell hooks (1991, p.154),

Racist and sexist assumptions that Black women are somehow ‘innately’ more capable of caring for others continues to permeate cultural thinking about Black female roles. As a consequence, Black women in all walks of life, from corporate professionals and university professors to service workers, complain that colleagues, co-workers, supervisors, etc. ask them to assume multi-purpose caretaker roles, be their guidance counselors, nannies, therapists, priests, i.e., to be that all nurturing ‘breast’ – to be the mammy.

Collins (1986) discussed Black women as having an “outsider within” status which is a unique perspective on self, family, and society. The experiences of Black women as mothers to White children created an “insider” position where “affluent Whites often mention their love for their Black mothers while Black women knew they would never belong to their White families in spite of their involvement, remaining an outsider” (p. 14). Black women are tasked with providing economic resources within the Black community, thus forming a network of support to relieve pressure from the larger political economy (Collins, 2005). The outsider within status may have contributed to forming a community of support to help dismantle racism, slavery, and social disparities.

In the Black community, it is an acceptable practice to provide Black children with “othermothers,” women who assist blood mothers by sharing mothering responsibilities has been central to the institution of Black motherhood, by not leaving the full responsibility of raising Black children to just one mother (Collins, 2005). This idea of blood mothers and othermothers has become essential in ensuring the success of Black children which can be seen in recent times where children are being raised by grandmothers, aunts, siblings, and other members of the village to help with creating change and opportunity for Black children to success (Collins, 2005).

Culture in Counseling

Engaging unexamined elements in Black women's lived experiences as school counselors working with Black students can assist in filling the gap in the literature by incorporating Black women's views about this phenomenon. A wide range of differences exist in how Black women experience their psychological and emotional well-being (i.e., to be used synonymously with mental and emotional well-being or mental health outcomes in this study) and are impacted by perceptions of racism. The literature has shown perceived racism contributes to a range of adverse mental health outcomes including general psychological distress, low self-esteem depression, and anxiety (Paradies, 2006). Culture in school counseling indicates that some students have unique educational needs requiring additional support from school counselors. This study will highlight how female Black school counselors perceive this need for additional support and how it impacts their role.

Summary

Chapter 2 provided a review of extant literature on training, roles, evolving expectations, and self-perceptions of school counselors, burnout, and misalignment of counselor roles. Chapter 3 described the methodology for the multiple case study design. Specifically, Chapter 3 provided the research questions guiding the study, research design, methods, and the researcher's ethical concerns.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the thoughts and perceptions of female Black school counselors through the lens of Black Feminist Thought and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Upon interviewing female Black school counselors in an urban school district in Louisiana, I addressed three research questions:

R1) How do female Black school counselors perceive their role when working with African American students?

R2) How do female Black school counselors explain how they cope with role confusion and burnout? and

R3) How do cultural expectations co-mingle, blend, and merge with their perceived role of a school counselor?

This chapter detailed the methodology to be used, beginning with a rationale followed by the research approach. Next, I explained the strengths and limitations of the research design. Then I described how I selected the participants and reduced possible ethical concerns. I also described my role as the researcher and finally will explain my data collection and analysis procedures.

Research Questions

The following central guiding questions directed this multiple case study research and provide a basis for a thorough description of female Black school counselor's perspective about their perceived role when working with Black students.

1. How do female Black school counselors perceive their role when working with Black students?

2. How do female Black school counselors explain how to cope with role confusion and burnout caused by cultural expectations along with multiple role expectations from administration, teachers, students, and parents? And
3. How do cultural expectations co-mingle, blend, and merge with their perceived role of a school counselor?

Research Methods

This research study was conducted as a multiple case study with a constructivist paradigm (Stake, 2013; Yin, 2003). Qualitative research is an exploratory method concerned with understanding a phenomenon; discovering and understanding a phenomenon is more important than establishing a statistical relationship between two sets of variables (Ivankova, Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Because qualitative research focuses on describing and understanding rather than generalizing, the main benefit of qualitative research is the information about the manifestation of a phenomenon. Creswell (2007) posited five approaches to qualitative research: narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. The use of case studies in the field of school counseling has been widely used for research (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Eschenauer & Chen-Hayes, 2005; Goodman-Scott, 2013; Windle, 2010) because the case study methodology “focuses on the binding concept or idea that holds the cases together” (Stake, 2013, p. 11).

Research Design

I chose a case study design because the study of interest aligned closely with the tenants of a case study. According to Gustafsson (2017), “a case study can be defined as an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units” (p. 2). Cousin (2005) suggested that case study methodology is a good way to explore a

setting to understand it. As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, cultural expectations and their roles in the performance of female Black school counselors can be seen as a focus of research grounded in the realities of these counselors and their perceptions of their role while working with Black students. La Roche & Christopher (2009) defined cultural expectations as the common ways in which individuals understand and develop the meaning of themselves and their worlds. Yin (2003) suggested there are two important factors when conducting a qualitative case study design— the phenomenon studied and the context in which the researcher comes to understand the phenomenon. In summary, the phenomenon are cultural expectations and the context in the school counseling role; the boundaries between them serves as the interest of this study.

I also selected this research design because I believe that the solution to school counselor role confusion and identity has yet to be discovered, especially for female Black school counselors. Additionally, the voices of school counselors from the field have been one voice for the profession as whole. The current study will begin to narrow the voice to develop a deeper understanding of how the overarching concepts of school counselor role confusion are seen within an already marginalized group – Black school counselors. According to Solberg-Søilen & Huber (2006,) the purpose of case studies is to provide background data about a problem. Case studies are also used in situations where it is difficult to find a resolution. This study seeks to explore how Black school counselors perceive their role when working with Black students, and how they cope with role confusion and cultural expectations that exist within the school counseling profession.

Another reason I chose a qualitative case study design is because quantitative research is concerned with the numerical relationship of at least two variables. One variable, which is

sometimes called the predictor in observational research and the independent variable in experimental research, is assumed to explain variance in another variable. In this study, however, I intend to analyze the differences and similarities related to the phenomenon of female Black school counselors and their perceptions of role confusion and burnout. Thus, the use of a qualitative case study design will facilitate answering my “how” and “why” research questions and provide a thorough and valuable description.

Finally, the use of a multiple case study design, sometimes referred to as collective case studies, examined the viewpoints, experiences, and perceptions of Black school counselors, preferably employed at different schools within the same school district, concerning their experiences when working with Black students. Through individual interviews and document collection, perceptions from school counselors included in this study provided insight on how female Black school counselors experienced burnout and role confusion in a field that has a long-standing history of burnout and role ambiguity. Using a multiple case study design, I anticipated that an opportunity for in-depth knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon would occur during interviews and document collection.

Each participant in the multiple case study indicated a single case or unit of analysis. Using a multiple case study design presented a more complete picture of the findings as well as combined the data collection to related theme patterns for analysis. Yin (2009) found that depending on a single-case design may leave the researcher in jeopardy by having “all your eggs in one basket” (p. 60). Instead each case reinforced the findings from the other cases, supporting the argument and or filling in the gaps from the other. This researcher’s opinion supported the use of a multiple case study design using participants with the intention of

providing stronger and more compelling findings to address the central guiding questions more completely.

Participants in the multiple case study were personally contacted via telephone or email wherein I explained the purpose of the proposed study, the criteria for their selection, participant expectations, and informed consent permission. The school district and school site granted permission for the research after an explanation detailing the focus of the research, data collection method, participant information, and proposed ethical considerations to protect those involved in the study was provided. Copies of both school site and district permissions are included in Appendix A and B. This study also received approval from the Institutional Review Board of Louisiana State University. See Appendix C.

Constructivists claim that truth is relative and that it is dependent on one's perspective, recognizing the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Qualitative research does not take interest in making external statistical generalizations because the goal is to obtain insight into particular social or familial practices that exist within a specific location and unique context (Connolly, 1998). In addition, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) suggested that if the "objective of the study is to generalize qualitative findings from the sample to the population, then the researcher should attempt to select a sample that is representative" (p. 242), which usually is not the goal. On the other hand, if the goal is not to generalize to a population but to obtain insights into a phenomenon, then the qualitative researcher purposefully selects individuals, groups, and settings for this phase that increases understanding of phenomena (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

Research Site

The study's sample consisted of a select group of five Black female school counselors from southern Louisiana. Participants were employed at different schools in the same school district, the urban schools in the Capitol Parish School System (pseudonym). Participants were employed at sites designated as comprehensive schools. Comprehensive schools are the most common form of public high schools in the US (Campbell & Sherington, 2006).

Participants

African American women are often described as “the strong Black woman” involving a set of cognitive and behavioral expectations, specifically “standing up for oneself, having self-resilience, and taking care of others” (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007, p. 425). Black women face the notion of having exceptional strength and care taking abilities (Watson & Hunter, 2016). The layers of duties stemming from both the school counseling profession, which involve non-counselor related tasks and cultural expectations, including “prioritizing others needs and Black families and communities” (WoodsGiscombé, 2010, p. 426), has the potential to increase levels of stress and subsequently result in poor mental health for African American female counselors (Watson & Hunter, 2015).

According to Wingfield et al. (2010), the roles of school counselors alter as social, political and economic platforms are voiced, which also create additional uncertainty of purpose for counselors. “Role ambiguity in the school counseling profession is present to the extent that even school counselors have different perceptions of their roles in the school environment” (Labmie & Williamson, 2004, p. 124). The school counseling profession has existed for more than 100 years and competing professional identity constructs have impacted the roles and responsibilities of school counselors (Cinotti, 2014).

Schwandt (2001) posited that participants are chosen for study because they are expected to yield similar data; Stake (2000) referenced these designs as collective case studies. In qualitative research, Patton (2002) referred to purposive sampling as “information rich cases” (p. 230), in order to learn a great deal about issues of central importance.

In the initial stage of this study, I engaged in convenience sampling to determine the direction of the study by locating female Black school counselors who were available and have experienced most of the phenomenon (Richards & Morse, 2007). Following convenience sampling, a criterion-based selection process identified the choice of participants. Since this study seeks to discover female Black school counselor’s perceptions and experiences, the criteria highlighted important factors that will answer the study questions.

According to Collins, Onwuegbuzie, and Jiao (2007), a multitude of purposive sampling schemes can be utilized for research studies. For this study, two schemes – criterion and convenience – are appropriate. Criterion is selected as school counselors who agree to participate must be in a current counseling position; convenience is also appropriate as target participants who are working in a parish-wide (county) public school system in proximity to the university setting.

As an additional criterion, female Black school counselors were recruited for this study. They were required to meet three sub criteria to participate in the study: They possessed a current school counselor certification, had at least one-year experience in an urban school setting, and one year working with students in urban schools in southern Louisiana. They also had experience working with Black students while being employed at least a year as a school counselor. Participants in the multiple case study were contacted via telephone or email and provided with the purpose of study, the criteria for their selection, participant expectations, and informed

consent permission. The school district and school site granted permission for the research after an explanation detailing the focus of the research, data collection method, participant information, and ethical considerations to protect those involved in the study. Copies of both participant school site administrator informed consents are included in Appendix B.

The participants were female Black school counselors currently employed by the Capitol Parish School System; an urban school district located in Louisiana. A school counselor directory was provided by the Executive Director of Guidance and Counseling for the school district. In the recruitment email, I attached an informal consent to participants to begin the study (see Appendix A). The Participant Screening Demographic Form allowed each participant to specify if they were a current employee, Black, female, and has been employed as a school counselor for at least one year. Emails were sent to all participants thanking them for offering to participate, even if they were not selected (Appendix G). I noted my rationale for the cases chosen. A separate email was sent to selected participants to schedule a time for the initial interview (see Appendix E).

Table 1. Counselor Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Self-Identified Ethnicity	Years as Counselor	Type of School	SPS Grade
Casey	Female	Black	6	Elementary Comprehensive	A
Joane	Female	Black	10	High School Comprehensive	C
Kristin	Female	Black	6	High School Comprehensive	F
Laura	Female	Black	22	Middle School Comprehensive	C
Ashley	Female	Black	4	Elementary Comprehensive	F

Using pseudonyms, Table 1 describes the participants' demographic information including gender, self-identified ethnicity, years of experience as a counselor and their respective School Performance Scores (SPS). In addition, counselors were asked if they held a current school counselor certification.

Data Sources

Three data sources were used, consisting of interviews, a researcher's reflective notebook, and artifacts. This study gathered data primarily from interviews and documents using the central questions as a guide. Prior to gathering data, I piloted the data collection protocol with a member of my dissertation committee and received feedback on my data collection analyses and methods before recruiting participants. Interviews with the participants served as the predominant form of data.

Interviews

Interviews became one of the most necessary aspects of data collection for this research study, as it was able to capture and collect information that is not feasible to observe (Merriam, 1998). Interviews allowed the researcher to explore the thoughts and perceptions of role identity from female Black school counselors while working with Black students. The interviews were semi-structured, with a list of open-ended questions and probes to allow participants to expand on their answers (Roulston, 2010). Semi-structured interviews were most appropriate for this study for the researcher to develop a rich and in-depth understanding of how female Black school counselors interpret their role while working with Black students, and if their role is influenced by factors such as cultural identity or racial injustices. Open-ended questions pertaining to their experiences with multiple role definitions and identities whether assumed or given, allowed the participants to elaborate upon their specific circumstances. This included feelings, perceptions, meaning making, and understandings concerning the counselor identity undergone while working with Black students (Merriam, 1998; Roulston, 2010).

The initial structured interview questions focused on general information describing background material such as personal information and the types of roles and or duties assigned

while working in the capacity of a school counselor. “This information provided the foundation for questions that access the interviewees perceptions, opinions, values, emotions” (Merriam, 1998, p. 82). Subsequent inquiry hinged on more specific questions related to the study central questions. The structured format in this phase of interviewing led to more open-ended questioning with additional follow-up questions based on the participant’s answers. After participants confirmed the transcription originality of the interview texts through emailed documents containing their individual comments to the researcher, the participants were granted the opportunity to provide additional comments pertaining to the interview protocol.

Interviews were conducted via Zoom, a teleconferencing platform that allowed the participant and I to meet. With permission, interviews were recorded, and then transcribed at the end of each interview. Individual interviews occurred one on one and conclude between 30 minutes to an hour. Transcriptions began within 48 hours using Rev, an audio to text transcription resource. One week after interviews concluded, participants were given a copy of the transcript to review the accuracy of information and to make any final changes or comments. All participants received a “Member Check Email” (See Appendix F).

Reflective Notebook

A researcher’s reflective notebook was kept as a triangulating data source. I recorded observations, thoughts, and perceptions throughout the study. Jacelon and Imperio (2005) articulated,

Unsolicited, personal diaries are an interesting source of data reflecting the writer’s point of view. In a personal diary, the writer is writing for his or her own benefit, and usually the diary is private and not intended to be read by another person (p. 991-992).

Throughout the study, I noted reoccurring patterns of thoughts as well as my own interpretations, thoughts, and feelings.

Artifacts and Documents

Several artifacts were collected. The third source of data was issued from the review of documents obtained from the school district's human resources website pertaining to the job functions and duties of school counselors. The researcher also will review documents obtained from the American School Counselor that describes school counselor's identity and appropriate tasks. Documents presented a third source of data for the research study. The data found in these documents contributed to "historical understanding" and background related to the central guiding questions. Obtaining the ASCA role statement and the school district's school counselor job description verified that school counselors are subject to function and provide school counseling based on the understanding of their administrators. Documentary data are considered "objective sources compared to other forms" (Merriam, 1198, p. 126). The sources for documents included:

- The American School Counselor Association role statement and appropriate versus non counselor tasks
- School counselor job descriptions as stated on the school district's human resources website
- School district's handbook.

These documents supplied foundational information about the background of school counseling while creating a path for inquiry to be obtained through interviewing.

Data Analysis Procedures

Creswell (2009) posited that data analysis involves “making sense out of the text” (p. 183). For this study, the composition of the participant interview questions connected to the central questions guiding the study. Semi-structured questions assisted the researcher in capturing the participants’ views about their experiences and their opinions concerning their role as a school counselor, essentially creating a scheme of thoughts and views.

Code mapping for this study showed emerging patterns and themes in the collected data. Coding permitted the researcher to identify patterns and highlight participant experiences relevant to the study’s central questions. I analyzed interviews utilizing a thematic conceptual content analysis (Carley, 1990) while monitoring the frequency of experiences shared by all participants. I reviewed the data by examining the full transcription of the participant interview. I also coded the transcripts in the same order in which I interviewed the participants, thus providing the opportunity to alter the interview protocol for future interviews if warranted (Stake, 2006). I used open coding to document terms that seem significant to the participant and any repetition of words or phrases stated during the interview (Saldana, 2015).

Prior to coding, I reviewed all documents collected in the order that they were received. Stake (1995) suggested using categorical aggregation to highlight emerging patterns and themes in the collected data. As themes emerged, further identification through coding gave rise to narratives emphasizing participant experiences relevant to the study’s central questions. Conastas (1992) added that designating these categories provides a manageable way of describing and organizing large amounts of transcribed interviews and other written data for evaluation for the purposes of theme development. According to Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, and Snelgrove (2016):

Different types of codes are recognized in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis ‘Conceptual code’ identifies key elements, domains and dimensions of the study phenomenon; ‘relationship code’ identifies links between elements, domains and dimensions; ‘participant perspective code’ identifies the participant’s positive, negative, or indifference comments about a particular experience; ‘participant characteristic code and ‘setting code show the general characteristics of participants and the place in which the phenomenon has happened, respectively. Such a classification not only helps researchers organize codes, but also enables detailed comparison and classification prior to the subsequent analytical steps (p. 103).

Table 2. Phases and Stages of Theme Development

Phases	Stages
Initialization	Reading transcriptions and highlighting meaning units; Coding and looking for abstractions in participants’ accounts; Writing reflective notes
Construction	Classifying; Comparing; Labelling; Translating & transliterating; Defining & describing
Rectification	Immersion and distancing; Relating themes to established knowledge; Stabilizing
Finalization	Developing the storyline

Table 2. Phases and stages of theme development in qualitative content and thematic analysis. Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove (2016).

The research utilized the four phases of theme development outlined by Vaismoradi, et al. (2016), which include the initialization phase, construction, rectification, and finalization (see Table 2). Through a conscientious analysis of the collected data, strengthened with supportive literature, theme patterns emerged, and conclusions developed regarding the central guiding questions. Chapter 5 includes a thorough discussion of these findings and conclusions.

Philosophical Assumptions

As the researcher, I presented the realities of employed female Black school counselors in a south Louisiana, urban school district. These school counselors reported their experiences related to the study, including their job history and education. I reported multiple realities of the participants and developed themes as they arose from the study. Addressing the knowledge justified in the research, the researcher relied on the quotes of each participant. School counselors were interviewed, followed by an analyzed and coded transcription of the interview. Throughout the study, biases were reported as any prior interpretation of the researcher.

Prior to conducting the interviews, I acknowledged being employed as a school counselor in the same school district as the school counselors sought for the interviews. To reduce and or minimize personal bias as suggested by Creswell (2008), three primary forms typically used by researchers were used to reduce personal bias “triangulation, member checking, and auditing” (Creswell, 2008, p. 266). The researcher employed the following strategies:

- The use of triangulation between interviews, notebook, and document collection
- Structuring interviews to focus on the school counselor’s experiences and perceptions of their role when working with Black students
- Member checking and peer auditing.

Validity

Validity in qualitative research means that the researcher uses procedures to check for the accuracy of the finding (Creswell, 2009). The validity procedures used in this study included member checking and peer auditing. Member checking involves “taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible” (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). The participants in this study were provided the

opportunity to read the transcripts and the researcher's interpretations of the transcribed analyzed themes and descriptions to check for mistakes or inaccurate assumptions.

Peer editing, the second strategy used in this study, strengthened the validity of the case (Creswell, 2009). Two colleagues reviewed and commented on the study, data analysis, and findings. One of the colleagues has taught in the school district of interest for eight years and the second colleague is a former school counselor who is no longer employed with the district. Both colleagues' familiarity with the setting coupled with the strategies used to ensure validity add to the credibility of the study findings. Neither individual has a vested interest in the study.

Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research involves the use of consistent approaches that ensure the dependability of results for increasing the reliability of the case study (Yin, 2009). This data was divided into two main categories: transcriptions and notes from interviews and document analysis notes. A Google doc account with the case study data served as an archive for member checking and peer auditing. All digitally recorded interviews were transcribed and stored in this account. During data collection, participants were notified by e-mail as these interviews were transcribed. Separate file documents for each participant were e-mailed for independent review and confirmation of validity. Participants emailed the researcher after reading and confirming the content.

Trustworthiness

Cope (2014) refers to credibility in qualitative research as the truth of the data and or the experiences of participants are accurately verifiable. The research made certain the audio following the transcription of interviews were confirmed and approved by each participant to determine if the research captured the representation of concepts possibly found in the study. By

doing so, the researcher followed the protocol and completed detailed processes and descriptions to create consistency and or dependability throughout the data (Polit & Beck, 2012), using triangulation to build credibility for the intended study to report congruent findings (Cope, 2014).

Confirmability in qualitative research mentions that the researcher should be aware of their own biases and interpretations when conducting research as to not compromise the findings and to accurately describe how such the research study conclusions were made (Cope, 2014). In doing so, the researcher can support transferability, which supported the aim of the study (Polit & Beck, 2012).

Ethical Considerations

Gaining Institutional Review Board Approval (IRB) from the degree granting institution prior to initiating the research process served as a means of ensuring participant confidentiality and ethical protection. The in-depth interviews provided relevant information about the participant's thoughts, feelings, behaviors, meanings, and interpretations (Woods, 2011). All interview participants received informed consent forms stating

- purpose and description of the study.
- participant expectations and requirements for the study.
- participants' rights, risks and benefits, and confidentiality protection.
- participants' option to leave the study at any time; and
- participants' right for voluntary consent.

All participants received assurance of precautions established for the protection of confidentiality and ethical rights associated with the study both during and after the study. To protect identities, pseudonyms were assigned and known only by the researcher and the

participants. All gathered data was safely stored according to the rules of data protection and conservation. Verbal permission from participants were gathered and noted on transcripts and recordings prior to any audio interviews. Participants also received information that the dissertation may be published on the Internet.

Summary

This chapter provided a description of the qualitative case study methodology and related procedures that will form the premise of this research. A review of the research problem, central guiding questions, and multiple case study design provides a foundation for the specific research protocol employed in this study. A consideration of the choice of population and setting for the study, sources of data, and the means of obtaining the data were discussed and outlined. Additionally, a discussion of the ethical considerations to protect the rights of all participants were covered in this chapter. Chapter 4 will discuss the findings of the study. Participant perceptions and interpretations are recorded, analyzed, and synthesized.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Introduction

This qualitative study examined the perceptions of female Black school counselors regarding school counselor burnout and role confusion. The findings were analyzed from in-depth interviews, document analysis, a reflective notebook, and demographic information. Specifically, this study examined female Black school counselor perceptions of their role when working with Black students. Collins (2016) Black Feminist Thought was the lens used to explore the thoughts, feelings, and interpretations of female Black school counselors in their work.

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. How do female Black school counselors perceive their role when working with Black students?
2. How do female Black school counselors explain how to cope with role confusion and burnout caused by cultural expectations along with multiple role expectations from administration, teachers, students, and parents?
3. How do cultural expectations co-mingle, blend, and merge with their perceived role of a school counselor?

Data were collected after IRB approval via interviews and a voluntary demographics questionnaire. Interviews were conducted with 5 female Black school counselors. Artifacts collected were local K-12 school counselor job postings, ASCA Model school and counselor role statements in order to position the results of the study.

Results of this qualitative study were catalogued by themes, revealing perceptions of female Black school counselor's role and burnout. The voices of participants were heard as their direct quotes illustrate their lived experiences.

Table 3. Codes and Themes

Theme	Category	Codes	Code Instances
Know their past	Counselor determine needs based on cultural influence	Analysis of resources History of discipline and attendance Observe the student behavior while at school Education of parent	7 4 4 5
Level the Playing Field	Collective expectation to fill in gaps	Reduce societal racial expectations Do what needs to be done to avoid another statistic Pressure and guilt	11 18 12
Parent and Mentor	Students who are need an extra push Parents who need support	Nurturer Teachers Liaison Parents are not likely to request services unless suggested	9 7 10 3
Collaborator	Parents with education	Knowledgeable Knows how to navigate through school system Request services they think are needed	3 7
Frustrations	Multiple Role Definitions School Counselor Training Prove My Competence	Everyone has a say in what we do More unrelated counselor tasks Not enough time to work with students Paid clerks Engaged in non-school counselor tasks More training need for actual school duties Many people can do our jobs because we are too busy doing clerical work Culturally, Black women deal with micro-aggressions (angry Black woman and lack of trust)	15 11 9 16 7 7 8 5

(table cont'd.)

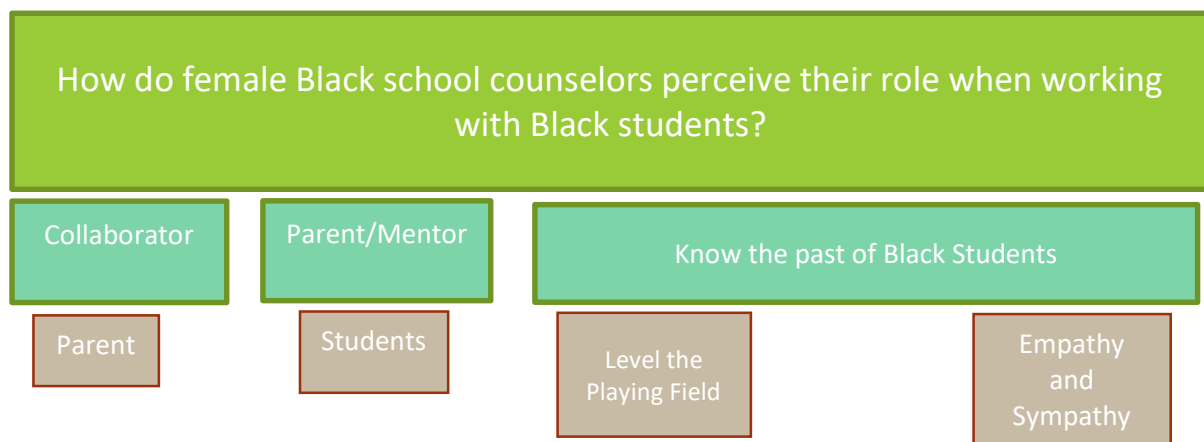
Theme	Category	Codes	Code Instances
Jane of all Trades	Administrators	Expected to respond like Administrators Dump job Everything that goes on, school counselors are involved	4 17 12
Magicians	Parents	School counselors must break all barriers and help Overlook teachers, students, and administrators	10 9
Culture	Identity	We should help Black students because they need it and are easy targets for discrimination We see them as our own children and are moved with compassion We help all student alike. Some students need more Motherwork/Othermothering Crossing the lines It takes a village	6 4 11 3 7 11

Table 3 illustrates the initial codes that emerged throughout the study. Yin (2015) referred to the method of identifying relevant discussion as level 1, or initial coding. “These codes can stick closely to the original data, even reusing the exact words in the original data (p. 196). For the purpose of this study I, the researcher, employed this method of coding through which participant statements and phrases were coded with some new phrases decided by the researcher. This process was utilized throughout the entirety of the transcripts. Participants were coded in order in which they were interviewed.

Female Black School Counselor Perceptions

This section presents results pertaining to Research Question 1, “How do female Black school counselors perceive their role when working with Black students?” Participating counselors had varying views on their roles. The inclusion of School Performance Scores (SPS), annual report cards assigned to schools to reveal effectiveness of a schools’ performance based on test scores, dropout rates, and areas of weaknesses (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005) provided an

another addition to the perceived role of the participants. Varying SPS did not affect participants' perception regarding their role when working with students. However, when working with parents who were perceived as educated or knowledgeable about school services, the participants in this study echoed a collaborator role. Other themes that emerged were parent and or teacher, all knowing, multiple role expectations, an administrator, understanding their needs, knowing the past of the Black race as a means for connection, going above and beyond, and providing opportunities.



Collaborator

Webster (2020) defines collaboration as working jointly together with others in an intellectual endeavor. Female Black school counselors reporting an SPS score of a “C” or better identified themselves as a collaborator with parents or guardians of Black students who they perceived were educated. Casey, a 6-year counselor currently working at an elementary school with an SPS of an “A” voiced that the school counselor’s role is likely to change depending on parental involvement and educational background:

So, when I'm working with a parent who is highly educated, that parent has tremendous expectations of me. They expect me to go more than above and beyond... When I'm working with a parent who has less education, it's more of just do what you can. I don't feel that I have any pressure on me from them. But with my educated parents, they typically wanna sit down, they wanna meet, they wanna write

letters, they wanna correspond, they're all in for the betterment of their child, they wanna give me all the information that I need to help their child succeed.

Sometimes the role of school counselors is impacted by the school's demographics, administration, and in this case, the individual school counselor's personal experience they bring with them into their work. Joane explained her position on working with parents and their expectations:

I think society and parents expect us to be their child's second parent while at school in order to help their child graduate. I have many parents of students who I have called, made phone calls, attempted to work with their student – because parents expect us to get their kid over the bump by any means. Even if they are not doing their job as a parent.

All counselors stated multiple times that they are expected to go above and beyond to make students successful despite the barriers that exists. Kristin, a 6-year counselor at a high school with an SPS of an "F" stated,

I think parents definitely expect me to be willing to go above and beyond. I think they're appreciative, but I also think they expect us to 'make it happen. Parents have this belief that we can somehow make magic happen or have super powers regardless of what their kid is doing, regardless of what teachers do and regardless of action taken by administration, that we as school counselors can still make things happen.

The participants in the study shared meaning surrounding the different roles they are expected to play when working with Black students. Changing roles corresponded to parental involvement and their familiarity with school subcomponents of schools. All participants commented that when Black students are lacking parental supervision, their role changes to a parent and or mentor.

Parent/Mentor

The parent and mentor role described by the participants emphasized that being a nurturer is a never-ending role when working with Black students. When further questioned about

perceived roles as a female Black school counselor while working with Black students, “We are there to mentor our young men and our young ladies.”

Joane, a 10-year counselor currently working at a high school with an SPS of a “C” and with students who she reported as inner-city youth, stated:

I think one of the roles that we have is being a mentor for our young ladies especially in the year of 2020, where you have so many misconceptions of the angry black woman, the domestic violence issues, and trying to hold our men accountable. So, for our students, especially our young ladies, it’s the model of how you can be a successful educated African American woman, and still hold the value to our roots.

Joane shares similar thoughts as Laura, a middle school counselor with an SPS of a “C.” They both agree that as a female Black school counselor, they are to model appropriate behavior for Black students,

So, I hesitate on how I’m gonna respond to my colleagues or parents just so I am not put in that category of being angry and mad and too aggressive and extra, and I’m like No, I’m not being angry, this is my natural response to anyone. We have to respond and pay attention to the example we are setting for our Black students.

There are many instances where school counselors help students with difficult situations or what some counselors call touchy or uncomfortable circumstances. Casey, 6-year elementary school counselor with an SPS of an “A” mentioned that

Sometimes parents expect me to help with something that could be a little uncomfortable, such as talking to a young lady about what areas should not be touched. For a long time, I feel like this is what a parent is supposed to do. So, when I encounter situations like that, I find myself counseling parents and teaching the parent how to talk to the child while I would sit in the room with a parent. Sometimes the parent expect me to help with things that extend beyond the school counselor scope, like I think that they want full blown therapy, but I do what I can to help the child cope.

The role of school counselors is often ambiguous and is filled with uncertainty as a result. As previously mentioned in the Chapter 1, the profession began as an extension of certified teachers who provided vocational guidance for the purpose of job placement (Dollarhide & Saginak,

2017). For the most part, school counselors are now being trained as mental health professionals and are more conditioned to address the social and emotional well-being of students. Dollarhide (2003) suggested that school counselors are often the only mental health professionals working in the schools. The assignment of non-counseling tasks and self-perceived roles, the female Black school counselors in this study experienced both internal and external conflict while in their role. DeKruyf et al., (2013) posited that school counselors should focus more on addressing the mental health needs of students to embrace their identity of a mental health professional, possibly resulting in less role ambiguity.

Know the Past of Black Students

Empathy and Sympathy

All participants in the study agreed that it is difficult to help Black students without knowing the past of the Black race. Most of the responses centered around the racial and social disparities and the additional roles female Black school counselors incur in their work with Black students. Bruce, Getch, and Ziomek-Daigle (2009) postulates that school counselors are in a unique position to lessen the achievement gap that exists between African American students and White students. The American School Counselor Association Model (2005) encourages school counselors to become agents of change within the school environment, fulfilling the question “How are students different as a result of what school counselors do?” (p. 9).

Uwah, McMahon, and Furlow (2008) asserted that school performance of African American male students has been a concern in education and referenced disparities noted in school outcomes between African American males than other student population. Holzman, (2006) suggested African American males more likely to be disciplined and negatively stereotyped by teachers than White students.

The consequences of failing to properly educate African American males are grave. Not only are African American males less likely to attend and complete college, but they are more likely to be underemployed or unemployed, and they are incarcerated more than any other gender-race group (Uwah et al., 2008, p. 296).

Several participants stated they are concerned with the success of all students and consider the cultural background of each student to determine their needs. Casey stated,

I've worked in poverty-stricken areas before and felt I understood the needs of the Black race and the student's needs, especially those kids who do not come from two parent households, parents who are incarcerated, being raised by grandparents, or parents who are deceased. I definitely have a big heart for those children because I can relate. I empathize and sympathize with them. Female Black school counselors carry a personal responsibility to or what some participants describe as a collective identity to fill in the gap in areas where students lack.

Kristin, 6-year school counselor described how empathy, sympathy and compassion come in in her work with Black students,

One of the first experiences I had in high school, was a kid with mental health issues and the first time I encountered him, I called his parent and I asked her to take him in for a crisis assessment, and he was hospitalized. He came back and I ended up being the person to intervene. Teachers and administration insisted that the student was not doing what they wanted him to do without consideration for his mental health or social and or economic status. Administration took the disciplinary route to suspend the student. When the student would have behavior issues, I would find myself running down the hall to get to the student before administration attempted to resolve the matter. Administrators knew the student needed mental health support but discredited the needs of the student. It is like saying, 'Well, you have a broken leg, but you still should be able to win.'

At least half of the respondents in this study shared they felt fearful regarding Black students being disciplined with suspension and expulsions, especially with Black males. Kerrison, Cobbina, and Bender (2018) predicated the notion, 'Black Respectability' which is defined as teaching members of the Black community what not to do or say, gaining more social respect. Black Respectability was also asserted from Ford (2015) who suggested that Black community members distance themselves from every criticized element of Black culture in an attempt to

acquire social capital. Black Respectability was referenced in Kerrison et al., (2018) as a response to the killing of Freddie Gray.

Freddie Carlos Gray, Jr., was born on August 16, 1984, and was pronounced dead on April 19, 2015. On April 12, 2015, Gray was arrested by officers of the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) for allegedly possessing an illegal switchblade. Eyewitness accounts and video footage suggest that the six BPD officers involved in Gray's arrest used excessive force while detaining him. It was also reported that the officers failed to safely secure Gray inside the transport van, resulting in his sustaining lethal injuries to his larynx and spinal cord (p. 8).

At least four participants shared they experienced cultural pressure to help Black students overcome social injustices by teaching them how to adjust their behavior to acquire respect and likability. Kristin added,

We keep the future of Black male students in mind. Some of our Black students get expelled and will not probably have a ride to the discipline center to complete the suspension or expulsion which negatively impacts them getting an education.

When asked what it means for Black students, especially Black males to not get an education, all participants responded similarly. They all agreed that Black students begin their educational and life journey with a strike against them – their skin color. With further questioning, Kristin shared,

Black students who are not successful academically become a target for more racial discrimination. They are in jeopardy of becoming incarcerated and as a female Black school counselor, I must do what I can to provide them with opportunities to become successful.

Wilson (2014) suggested Black male students are severely impacted by the school to prison pipeline line and that that schools are a “significant contributor to this crisis with more than half of incarcerated individuals entering prison without a high school diploma” (p. 1).

Skiba, Arredondo, and Williams (2014) also argued that school discipline practices are disproportioned, negatively impacting students of Color. The use of out-of-school suspension and expulsion are common practices used to discipline students Color at a higher rate than their White counterparts – essentially leading to negative life outcomes leading to increased dropout

rates and juvenile justice involvement (p. 547). Most of the participants shared their empathy for Black students is developed from a sense of connection to Black students and the Black community. Joane, a 10-year counselor stated:

We, as female Black school counselors assume the responsibility of making our children successful. And this goes back to our culture when members of the community would step in and help raise children who were not their own and that's why our Black students are not just our students, they are our sons and daughters.

Mawhinney (2011) discussed “othermothering” a term used to describe educators who act as extended family and take on mothering responsibilities (Collins, 2000). This concept grew out of a survival mechanism during slavery when children and biological parents were separated at auction, and “fictive kin” would take on mothering roles and responsibilities for the parentless children (Hirt, Amelink, McFeeters, & Strayhorn, 2008).

The work of othermothering (Collins, 2000) has served as a practice of Black educators when working with Black students. Roseboro and Ross (2009) explained that Black women and their assumed responsibility of othermothering: “They must do so in ways which complicate traditional perceptions of teaching and care; for Black women, ‘othermothering’ and transgressive teaching demand an ethic of care that is both defensive and proactive, embodied and performed, private and public” (p. 21). Mawhinney (2011) posited that othermothering blurs and complicates boundaries that exists in traditional educator to student relationships.

Level the Playing Field

Renninger and Hidi (2020) highlighted that not all individuals approach tasks or activities with an equal amount of ability or preparedness to engage and differences can exist in focus, comprehension, or the ability to problem solve can all result in an unlevel playing field for learners. The responders in this study provided insight on their role in leveling the playing field for Black students as they all voiced that Black students begin their journey with a strike against

them because they are Black. Most of the participants are suffering from secondary trauma following social unrest of police brutality and killings of unarmed Black men. Laura, a 22-year counselor at a middle school shared,

All of my students are given the same quality of care and counseling. But at the end of the day, I have to make sure I provide Black students with a little extra care or for lack of a better word, a push to help them understand who they are and the system that they are in. I also teach students that because to many people, they are expected to behave poorly. So, when my Black students misbehave, I have to teach them to be better than what is expected of them by society.

Kristin, a 6-year counselor shared similar thoughts related to the social unrest of Black men in America and how it influences her work. Kristin stated:

You bring in that racial disparity and you bring in the police brutality, it influences your work to some degree, and you feel bad when a Black kid doesn't make it to the next level. There's a pressure that comes along with helping Black students because we want them to have the same chances as others and not be seen for the color of their skin, how they dress, or their hair type.

Another school counselor, Joane a 10-year counselor discussed her role in leveling the playing field for Black students is taking on the role as a second parent while working with Black students. Joan shared,

I tell my parents, if you trust me, we're gonna have a relationship and I am gonna do right by your kid. What I mean by this is, I am going to tell them right from wrong. I am going to get on them. When I see some of my students as I am walking down the hallway, students can hear me saying "You skipping? What are you doing?" The students would reply, "We know what you're gonna say, I'm telling your momma."

When furthered questioned about their work with Black students, Laura stated:

My role is to make sure that I'm not only helping them academically, socially or emotionally, with college and career development, but also addressing those needs where they are falling short. I help them understand that falling short in these other areas, is 10 times 10 for them as opposed to their White counterparts. I also have to make sure I am having that extra conversation with my Black students to help them understand how society may view them and why it is important that their work ethic has to be better than everyone else on this campus. So, part of my role is setting an example for them by the way I conduct myself on campus. I have to be mindful of how I speak and respond to colleagues to teach them how to behave in a professional environment.

Overall, participants revealed that, their role with Black students is ongoing and includes many elements such as compassion, understanding, protection from possible failure that may result in decrease economic status that extends beyond school. At least half of the participants shared some of their students become their God children while some students continue to need support well into adulthood.

Mawhinney (2011) mentioned that when Black women are engaged in othermothering with Black students, the relationship can mirror the imbalance often seen in parent and child relationships. Kristin stated that one of the differences in her work with White student's as opposed to Black students are:

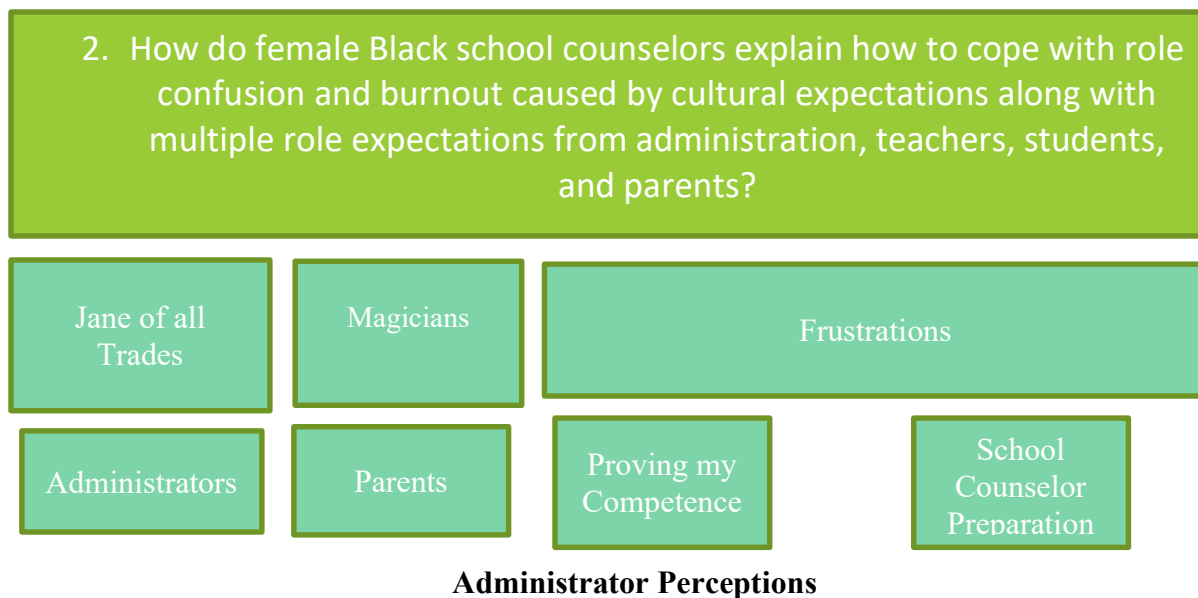
White students have the same issues as Black students, however, when they are being disciplined, the movement is progressive and as a school counselor you provide the same level of attention to them as with Black students. When working with White students, there is a sense of "a clean break" after helping the student. When working with Black students, there is more work involved because of the transference that exist that makes the process ongoing. Black students don't get good breaks when it comes to discipline measures in P-12 schools and the research supports this. It is a concern how things will go when working with our Black students.

Owens, Simmons, Bryant, and Henfield (2011) articulated that school polices may not support positive outcomes for Black students. Additionally, Duncan and Jackson (2007) indicated that societal views may influence some African American males to accept negative perceptions and stereotypes as normative, thereby assuming negative attitudes toward school and learning. The American School Counseling Association (ASCA, 2005) recommends that school counselors should spend 80% of their time in direct services including individual and or group counseling, prevention, and intervention services, promoting a strong relationship between school counselors and students. However, the ASCA Model offers little guidance on how to help meet the complex needs of students who are impacted by school polices that are not designed to support Black students. "Providing urban school counseling to African American students necessitates

understanding their perspectives of school counselors and perceived counseling needs” (Owens, et al., p. 167).

Summary

This section highlighted school counselors’ perceptions of their role when working with Black students. This section presented how participants functioned as both collaborators when working with educated parents and as parent/mentors when working with low income and or students of parents with little to no parental involvement. The female Blacks school counselors in this study also spoke of their own collective identity that interacts with their perceived role concluding all students receive quality school counseling services while Black students are in need of extra support based on cultural factors and racial disparities.



School principals serve as a major influence on professional school counseling (Duslak & Geier, 2016). By way of their authority, school principals largely determine, the role of school counselors in their buildings by assigning counselors’ duties and tasks (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Duslak & Geier, 2016). The participants in the study agreed that an administrator’s understanding of the school counseling role is the most significant and determines how they

function on a campus. In other words, if the principal has it wrong, everything following will be wrong. Casey, a 6-year school counselor shared “Having a principal who trust you as a school counselor is everything. If there is hesitation regarding your competence or capabilities can result in more non-counseling tasks being assigned.”

School counselors are encouraged to advocate for their role to decrease role confusion and ambiguity. Most of the participants agreed they must educate their administration on their role which can also cause burnout. Laura, a 22-year counselor stated:

When administration determines the needs of the school, they usually think of school counselors as the go to person. This is how we end up with being 504 coordinators, SBLC chairs, School Test Coordinators, and anything else administration decides. School counselors are considered to be the heart of the school. We have a hand in all the functions of a school including registration of students to being placed in administrative positions.

School counselors are highly valuable professionals in the education sector and are the least understood (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). School counselors are uniquely positioned in schools to address the academic, personal and social, and career areas for students. “Counselors have both a holistic view of the students in their schools and the opportunity to provide targeted supports to keep these students on track for success, year after year” (p. 4). When school counselors can perform the approved school counselor duties incorporated by ASCA (2005) positive student outcomes can be achieved. Bringman, Mueller, and Lee (2010) postulated that school administrators have little to no training on the role of school counselors resulting in assigning inappropriate school counselor duties such as scheduling, discipline, clerical tasks, registration, 504 chairperson, and tests coordination. These activities take away time school counselors should spend on responsive services (ASCA, 2005). Kristen stated administration’s misunderstanding of the school counselor role impacts their work with students and will not allow for adequate services to be delivered to students. “I think principals expect school

counselors to be available 365 days a year and assume our jobs as school counselors come before anything else in our lives. Principals also want you to represent administration when speaking with students.”

Joane, a 10-year school counselor had a similar response to Kristin as it relates to principal expectations of school counselor’s time. Joane stated:

Principals expect school counselors to answer emails 365 days a year so technically, we are never off and are on call to do things when the principal is not available. The same level of work is expected even in the summer months when we are off. This can cause burnout.

The interview responses indicated changes in the school counselor role is mostly due to administrative understanding of what roles and tasks are appropriate for school counselors (see Figure 2). School principals’ opinions concerning the roles of counselors do not always coordinate with the American School Counseling Association’s (ASCA) recommendations (Kirchner & Setchfield, 2005). Principals often categorize school counselors’ roles as broad in scope and heavy on administrative duties (Zalaquett, 2005). As mentioned previously, school counselors are encouraged to advocate for their role. Mainly due to the ambiguity surrounding the role of school counselors. All participants acknowledge two key components of having less ambiguity in their role: trust and the ongoing process of building relationship with principals.

Casey, a 6-year school counselor voiced,

I do find that many administrators determine the role of the school counselor, however, they do not have an accurate view of what we do, so that’s why it’s so important for me to have a relationship with my principal so that I can educate and bring information to my principal, to let him or her know the role and duties of a school counselor. Because we have to advocate for ourselves, that’s one of the hardest things about being a school counselor.

When further questioned, Joane, a 10-year school counselor insisted,

I think we're expected to do our job. They expect us to be there for the kids and to be resource for them. Principals also expect us to solve a lot of the kid's problems and be a liaison between teachers and the students.

Bringman et al., (2010) shared school principal's perceptions of how school counselors should spend their time:

School counselors should spend time each week on Individual Education Plans, testing students, and performing hall, bus, restroom, and lunchtime supervisory duties. Principals also believed school counselors should spend less time working with individuals and small groups than counselors' thought was appropriate (p. 5).

All participants assented that school principals need more training on the role of school counselors. The overall statement in responses concluded "There are no boundaries to what school counselors can and cannot do." Four participants expressed frustration with administrative misunderstanding of their role. Alternatively, Laura, the 22-year school counselor supposed that school counselors should accept the ambiguity of their role to reduce frustration. "We are the go-to person. It's always been this way so we just have to do what we can."

Parent Expectations

Bradley, Johnson, Rawls, and Dodson-Sims (2005) suggested that the role of a school counselor is not just to work with students but must be multi-culturally competent to work with parents in order to increase student achievement. Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010) speculated that school counselors should spend 20% of their time strengthen partnerships with families and community agencies to provide education and services.

However, once placed in a school, most school counselors are assigned traditional activities to schedule classes, administer tests, address individual students' academic or behavioral problems, connect with selected families when students have difficulties, make referrals for student services in the community, and assist individual students with plans for college and careers (p. 1).

School counselors spoke about how parents believed the school counselor is the solution to every problem they or their student encounters. School counselors in this study voiced the role

confusion they experience from having multiple expectations from different stakeholders. When questioned about what some of the parental expectations are, Casey shared, “I think parents think school counselors have a magic wand and can do any and everything that does not involve teaching.”

Joane, a 10-year counselor voiced,

Parents expect school counselors to be available 24-7 essentially like administrators. Parents of Black students expect for us to listen to their kids, be their coordinates, and treat them like our own children. They would like school counselors to help their children become the best person they can be and get them out of trouble. I inform parents that part of me treating your kid like my own child includes having to get on them when they are doing wrong and telling them things they may not like.

School Counselors are not only responsible for providing guidance and counseling to students, but they are also tasked with guiding parents. Laura, a 22-year-old counselor explained that Many parents just simply don't know how to help their students and look to school counselors for support.” The expectation that parents have for school counselors is to solve and fix the problem while they're at school and to make sure their child is successful.

Many times, parents don't know what else to do and they look to school counselors to fix the problem. I just think school counselors just have to be comfortable in doing what they can do by referring students for services and being a collaborator between parents and teachers. We as school counselors have to help as best as possible and get used to being a point of contact for everyone.

Teachers

Teachers generally sees the role of a school counselor as helping students achieve in school (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). At the elementary level, teachers typically view the role of school counselors as collaborative and should support classroom instruction and environment (Clark & Amatea, 2004, p. 135). Both elementary school counselors included in this study reflected that teachers expect them to help reduce behavior problems in the classroom, serve as an administrator, make decisions, build character, and refer students for services. Casey, a 6-year

elementary school counselor stated, “Teachers do not have a strong cultural foundation when working with all students, especially Black students. I find myself educating teachers on how to communicate and interact with students of Color to help them succeed.” Ashley, a 4year elementary school counselor shared she is expected to provide guidance lessons and support teachers by providing professional training and acting a disciplinarian.

The research suggests that elementary school counselors will spend most of their time in working with families, discipline, and coordination of services related to academics, personal and social (ASCA, 1990). Perkins (2013) suggested that elementary school teachers view school counselors as mostly mental health specialists and less involved with academic intervention. Both Ashley and Casey shared that elementary teachers are open to receiving guidance from school counselor on helping student succeed academically, personally, and socially. Performing mostly coordination of services, Casey emphasized that as an elementary school counselor, it is important to know a wealth of knowledge relative to special education, academic and behavior interventions, and community resources.

Perkins (2013) posited that teacher perceptions on school counseling is often overlooked in the research, however teacher can provide valuable information for effecting school counseling programs. Reiner, Colbert, and Pérusse (2009) purported that teachers’ perceptions of school counselors should warrant more attention in the profession because teachers influence the perceptions of principals, students, and parents (p. 324). Secondary school teachers supported school counselor providing students with personal and or social counseling, however, teachers also value many non-counseling duties for school counselors such as maintaining student records, counseling students one-on-one in a therapeutic manner, administer cognitive and aptitude tests, register and schedule students (Reiner, et al., 2009, p. 329).

All participants in this study asserted they spend most of their time in non-counseling tasks that what is recommended by ASCA. Systemically, school counselors are not in the position to dismantle years of competing professional identities, in which Laura, a 22-year middle school counselor re-echoed. Laura suggested school counselors focus on creating a positive working relationship with administration to resolve role conflict, undervaluing teacher influence on school counselor role confusion. On the other hand, Kristin, a 6-year high school counselor shared that teachers do influence the work of school counselors. She reflected,

When a teacher comes into a problem with students, especially Black students, their perceptions, and values can rub off on administrators. Administrators will then look to discipline the student without input from school counselors. We know that the student may have problems, but I think administration fail to include school counselors in discipline practices.

Teacher perceptions of school counselor did not receive as much attention as administrator or parent influence on school counseling role confusion. All participants presented their experiences of teacher influence in their work. Three of the participants agreed teachers expect school counselors solve their problems with students by any means. This includes counseling, referral services, and academic support.

School Counselor Preparation

All participants stated, overall, that most of the school counselor training and preparation is not relevant to their current role and functions as a school counselor. Most made statements like Casey, 6-year counselor. She stated, “I wasn’t trained on the Disabilities Act (ADA). “Actually, I wasn’t trained a lot of special education services. Most of what I do now was learned on the job.” Acknowledgement of the misalignment of training in school counselor programs were revealed by most participants regarding the tasks they are doing day to day. Casey further explained,

When I completed my practicum, I solely focused on counseling the students, which aligned with my school counselor training. In retrospect, I would like to have been able to learn how to read school reports, LEAP data, and to actually experience the site supervisor's day to day role.

Kristen shared similar feelings as Casey in that they both agree there should be some changes made to school counselor training program to prepare school counselors for what they will experience. Kristin added that "School counselor practicum and internship should be longer or at least require school counselors to gain experience at all three levels, elementary, middle, and high school."

Studer and Quigney (2003) showed

School counselors are becoming more involved with special education by serving on teams that assist with disability identification and implementation of services, however, counselor education programs are not adequately training future school counselors to deal with changing roles and responsibilities included in servicing students with special needs (p. 73).

Coy (1999) postulated that school counseling training and preparation has changed dramatically over the years. School counselors are educated and trained in human growth and development, social and cultural foundations, helping relationships, group work, career and lifestyle development, appraisal, research and program evaluation, professional orientation, and supervised experience (p. 6).

Four of the participants in the study expressed concern with being trained as a therapist with specific training in mental health, yet they begin are employed by school districts to perform tasks that reduce their self-confidence with non-counseling tasks. As aforementioned, the school counselor role is often determined by the principal and the local school board (Muro and Kottman, 1995). Gysbers and Henderson (1997) recommended that local school boards collaborate with neighboring school counselor preparation programs to gain knowledge and expertise in developing guidelines for school counselor assigned roles and functions.

Prove my Competence

Participants spoke about their frustrations, first as a school counselor and then as a female Black school counselor. Most of the participants in the study agreed that one of the most frustrating aspects of being a female Black school counselor is not being considered as knowledgeable. Joane shared, “Colleagues of other races don’t feel as if I know as much as they know.” A similar response from Casey stated:

At my previous job, I worked with all white teachers and a white principal who were all from a rural area. I was the only black woman with a substantial amount of degrees, licenses, and certifications. During my time there, my views and opinions were often discredited. I felt the constant need to feel approved. My very first day on the job, I was asked by staff if I was the new paraprofessional.

Another participant, Kristen shared similar thoughts in her experience of proving she is knowledgeable. “As a female Black school counselor, people are constantly questioning what school counselors do and the everyone thinks they can be a counselor.” The consistent confusion surrounding the role of a school counselor allows for other educational stakeholders to assume school counselors’ duties and tasks can be done by practically anyone instead of specialized trained personnel with specific skills.

Black women who live and move in environments where they are marginalized and their lived experienced denied by those who are not Black (Scott, 2013, p. 312) are tasked with forms of shifting; including changing outward behavior, attitude, and tone, and adopting an alternate pose or voice “as easily as they blink their eyes or a draw breath” (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003, p. 7). Williams (2008) acknowledged titled his work, “Black pain: it looks like we’re not Hurting” asserted that Black women are at greater risk of depression as a result of constant scrutiny in multicultural environments.

As it relates to being a school counselor, the participants agreed that frustration is expanded when administration and district leaders expect school counselors to do whatever falls in our laps. Casey mentioned that, school counselors have a “dump job” reflecting on the expectation of school counselors working beyond the scope outlined by ASCA. Falls and Nichter’s (2007) articulated that school counselors experience reduced job satisfaction when they are demanded to meet boundless expectations by district leader, administrators, parents, students, teachers, and the limited time to meet these demands. Cervoni and DeLucia-Waack (2011) propose school counselors experience pressure from a variety of directions. However, the participants in this study explain the cultural pressure on school counselors – perpetuating role confusion and burnout.

Coping with Burnout and Role Confusion

Hall, Everett, and Hamilton-Mason (2012) suggested that “Black women face the same struggles as White women; however, they have to face issues of diversity on top of inequality” (p. 207). This study sought to explore how Black women cope with stress in the workplace. The study found that additional stress for Black women in their work environment include code switching, coping with racism and discrimination, being promoted, and defending one’s own race (Hall et al., 2012).

Coping is a process that involves “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage internal and external demands appraised as exceeding a person’s resources” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 114). The participants spoke about how they take care of their mental health while experiencing role confusion and burnout. They all agreed that self-care is a priority and may look different for each counselor. Most of the counselors stated they consider the summer months as positive coping skills for the burnout and role confusion. However, it is usually

interrupted because administration is accustomed to being able to have constant communication to school counselors all year. Ashely, a four-year counselor mentioned the adoption of poor boundaries due to being available 24/7. “You don’t know how to turn work off to engage in self-care because we have been conditioned to be on call.” All participants voiced the need to improve their mental health while in their role. Kristin brought up an interesting point when she shared “In the past, school counselors were in the field of school counseling longer than recent times.” She believes this is mostly due to increased role confusion and burnout.

Casey and Kristen stated having positive relationships with colleagues helps improve mental well-being. For example, Kristin shared that listening to music, having lunch and talking with the students seems to have a positive impact on the mental health of the participants in this study. Most of the counselors agreed that when helping students accomplish a goal or get through a tough time, they notice an improvement in their mood. Meanwhile, the participants responses to multiple roles had an adverse effect on the school counselor’s mental health.

Many of the participants spoke of having frustration as it relates to the many expectations of their role by all educational stakeholders. Joane, Casey, and Kristin mentioned they have experienced symptoms of anxiety and depression while in their role. Casey stated: “Having multiple role definitions makes me feel like something is wrong with me because it’s difficult to manage at times.” Kristin corroborated this as she stated, the most frustrating aspect of being a school counselor is the consistent question of what school counselors do and why. Another unrelated expectation of a school counselor is the insertion that school counselors significantly impact the school’s annual performance score. Kristin stated:

We are counselors, schedulers, 504 chairpersons, SBLC chair, clerk, administrator, liaison, social advocate, teacher, mentor, and parent figure. Having multiple roles as a counselor negatively impacts school counselor’s mental health – which can alter services students can access through a school counseling program.

James (2010) explains the mother teacher identity in education and emphasizes inequity in the relational expectations and care in teaching self-sacrificing. She explains that the mothering aspect of teaching can take an emotional, physical toll on educators. Emphasizing the term “self-sacrificing” participants in this current study struggled to articulate coping strategies used to counter the adverse experiences of role confusion, burnout, and cultural influences that are blended within their work performance. Culture in counseling appears to be most significant for female Black school counselors in their role. The participants echoed relief in being able to talk about their experiences on role confusion and burnout while participating in the study.

Summary

This section highlighted school counselors’ perceptions of how to cope with role confusion and burnout. Participants determined that having multiple roles negatively impacts their mental health. School counselors in this study highlighted helping students achieve goals and having more time with students in responsive services positively influences mental health for them. The next session will discuss culture and identity for female Black school counselors and the role culture plays in their work.

3. From the perspective of female Black school counselors, how does the cultural expectations co-mingle in their perceived role of a school counselor?

Culture as an Identity

Counselor
Awareness

Culture as an Identity

Culture in the Black community can be categorized by its responses to discrimination or in the words of W.E.B. Dubois, a double consciousness described at two conflicting identities (Quashie, 2012). Participants in this study highlighted the importance of culture in their role as a school counselor. Most of the responses focused on culture and the role it plays in determining the needs of students. Casey shared,

When working with any student, understanding the cultural background, I am able to understand their customs and social behaviors. For example, I had an Asian student who would not look a teacher in the eyes. The teacher would remind the student, “Look at me when I am talking to you.” I learned that in the student’s culture, it’s distasteful to look adults in the eyes.

Another example of culture in the school counseling role was mentioned by Lauren, 22-year counselor. She shared that there are different cultures within the Black community, speculating that “In the Black community, you have different cultures such as poor Black communities, the middle class, and the working class to name a few”. Lauren recommended educators view Black students as diverse based on their cultural background. In Lauren’s experiences, students in the impoverished Black community can come across as loud and may value socialism.

Students in this subgroup struggle to concentrate and always want to talk with friends. The value of community can carry a greater value than education. Black students who are from the working class may have latch key parents meaning they are home by themselves often. These students may not have their homework completed because they lack parental supervision. Black students from middle class families are provided with more resources so when they are not doing well in school, it’s a different conversation.

As a female Black school counselor, Lauren looks for the community from whence Black students are coming from in order to understand the culture and their needs. “For example, a Black student from an impoverished community is not expected to do much and education has to be made to be important at the school level in certain instances.” Kristen added a similar

response in her interview. She shared, “It is difficult to understand student needs without understanding their culture.

From the participants views, culture can be used to help promote better student outcomes. For Black students, specifically Black males, culture carries two sides; a means of understanding when it comes to the participants included in this study and on the other hand culture for Black students can have damaging effects. Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Culotta and DiTomasso (2014) did a recent study that revealed Black boys are more likely than white boys to be perceived as older and more mature than they actually are rarely viewed as innocent. Mutually, Washington (2018) argued that within the context of education, “Black males are more likely to receive more punitive disciplinary action (e.g., suspensions, expulsions, arrests) than white males for similar infractions (p. 97). In connecting culture to counseling, Washington (2018) additionally addressed the importance of multi-cultural training for school counselors as he referenced the national unrest of uprisings in the killing of unarmed Black men.

Ford (2012) articulated cultural differences is apparent in education with the over representation of Black students in special education. Farkas, Morgan, Hillemeier, Mitchell, and Woods (2020) explained the increased in referrals of Black students for special education services are significantly connected to the education and income of White and Black families in the district creating an imbalance of needs between students (p. 375). School counselors are trained to address cultural differences by implementing a full comprehensive school counseling program, proven to benefit student achievement outcomes (Lapan, 2012). The most impeding factor of implementing a comprehensive school counseling program consist of high student-to-counselor ratios and non-counseling duties and to which ASCA (2012) recommend 250 students assigned to each counselor in high poverty areas. Students who would benefit the most from a

comprehensive program are unable to access services. Performing more inappropriate school counseling duties creates loss time in working with students for 80% of the time, as suggested by ASCA (2012). Creating a program that identifies the needs of all students can improve student graduation and serves a predictor for higher graduation rates (Lapan, 2012).

Summary

School counselors in this study brought to light how culture influences their work with students. How they perceive culture and the ongoing engagement with Black students can exacerbate burnout. Culture in counseling is an important aspect of helping students with social and or emotional support. School counselors that culture is key in determining the needs of student. Therefore, counselors who don't take into consideration the cultural background of students can negatively impact student outcomes.

CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine and explore the perceptions female Black school counselors have regarding their role confusion and burnout while working with Black students. The goal of using a qualitative research case study design was to gain insight, reflection, and perspective into the perceptions of female Black school counselor's role when working with Black students.

Five Black female school counselors serving in an urban school district in South Louisiana participated in this study. Participants were employed actively at comprehensive schools with varying SPS scores. Common to all participants was serving Black students of diverse backgrounds living in high poverty to those living in middle class families. The school counselors participated in recorded interviews where one-on -one, semi-structured, open-ended interview protocols were used. To understand their perceptions, transcribed interviews were reviewed and analyzed for themes. These Black female school counselors shared their experiences and how multiple roles, and burnout impacted their work with Black students.

This study adds to the research of role confusion and burnout that exists within the school counseling profession. This chapter discusses the findings organized by the research questions. Recommendations for policy, practice, and future research are included and concluding remarks relative to the study are provided at the end of the chapter.

The purpose of this study was to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Black female school counselors perceive their role when working with Black students?

2. How do Black female school counselors explain how to cope with role confusion and burnout caused by cultural expectations along with multiple role expectations from administration, teachers, students, and parents?
3. How do cultural expectations co-mingle, blend, and merge with their perceived role of a school counselor?

Summary of Findings Related to Research Question 1

The first research question was concerned with how Black female school counselors perceived their role when working with Black students. One of the challenges for the participants in the study was unpacking the question from the role they assumed as a school counselor overall versus the role they played with Black students, which further complicated the definition of school counselor. Participants described their role in working with Black students as “never ending”. While in this role, all counselors agreed that they feel “pressured” to go above and beyond for at-risk Black students because of the fear of societal mistreatment if they were not successful. They all perceived that their role as a school counselor included being a parent, teacher, and or mentor when working with Black students.

The idea that Black students need a community or village to ensure their success dates back to slavery. It is not a role that is requested but rather is assumed by Black female school counselors to save Black lives. The counselors shared that Black students need more support than other peers in their cohort. This conclusion was consistent with literature stating Black students undergo more gaps in achievement due to cultural differences in achievement values than their peers of other ethnicities (Darensbourg & Blake, 2014). Counselors found themselves being social advocates, parents, and mentors to Black students who lacked such roles. All participants referred to a collective identity and the pressure to fill in the gap for Black students.

Although the counselors shared feelings of role confusion and burnout, the insight of understanding the past of the Black race seemed vital to allow these counselors to cope with the additional roles they played with Black students. Joane shared, “They’re our children. They are ours. When we see them, we see our cousin, our nephew, our niece, sons, and daughters. That’s a heavier burden than just helping a student with academics, social and or emotion, and career decisions.” This simple statement epitomized how participants viewed this responsibility. And often, as counselors, we see the adults in our Black communities reflected in the children we serve.

The school counselor’s role has undergone many transformations beginning with an extension of services that focused on vocational placement called guidance counseling to in 2020, focusing on a more comprehensive method – school counseling by a specially trained professional (Galassi, 2017). Despite the fact that the school counseling profession changed to meet the needs of students, Green and Keys (2001) criticized the new and improved comprehensive school counseling model for not including how culture and contextual factors play an integral part on student development and outcomes, especially for students of color. This study illustrated this finding from the literature.

School counseling models were implemented to substantiate and define the professional identity of school counselors, yet the roles of school counselors in educational systems have continued to be refined (ASCA, 2012). Along with the consistent changes of roles and functions of school counselors, female Black school counselors in this study agreed that they have additional pressure and role confusion when working with Black students because of their collective identity that goes back to slavery. For this reason, female Black school counselors

reported they are filled with compassion and sensitivity when working with Black students, contributing to more burnout.

The salient adjective female Black school counselors iterated was “magicians.” In addition to having their role inconsistent to school training and preparation, research has contributed to more role confusion with best practices to improve student outcomes. Studer and Quigney (2003) pushed for school counselors as advocates for students with disabilities – suggesting school counselors to educate teachers on classroom groupings. Dixon, Tucker, and Clark (2010) recommended school counselors focus on social justice for student to receive equal access to resources and services. The role of the school counselor is constantly changing. The rhetoric of “school counselors are in a unique position to help students.” The resounding thought of this unique position gives premise to perpetual misunderstanding of the roles and functions of school counselors. The frustration of cherry picking what school counselors do was reflected in the participants responses with the statement: “Everyone gets to say what school counselors do.” Summarily, the reams of research attempting to clarify the role of school counselors is interferes with the goal to provide school counselors with a unified professional identity.

Burnout and role confusion have been profoundly researched topics in school counseling. Moyer (2011) examined the significance that non-school counseling duties contribute to increased burnout. For the most part, the statistics involve research that has been normed on female White school counselors. To explain the rationale of this study, the following statistics will corroborate its relevance. The participants in Moyer (2011) “were predominantly Caucasian (n = 343, 89.8%) and the remaining sample was comprised of African American (n = 20, 5.2%), Asian (n = 2, 0.5%), Hispanic (n = 8, 2.1%), and nine participants (2.4%) who did not indicate ethnicity” (p. 9). Astramovich, Hoskins, Gutierrez & Bartlett (2013) also conducted a study on

school counselors regarding role confusion and burnout. The sample was “comprised of 97 (89%) females, 12 (11%) males and the ethnicity of the participants included 81 (74%) Caucasian, 13 (12%) Latina/Latino, 4 (4%) Asian American, 3 (3%) African American, and 6 (5%) representing other or multiple ethnicities” (p. 177). Mullen and Gutierrez (2016) conducted a study examining burnout and stress among school counselors. The participants (N = 926) included 816 (88.1%) female, 110 (11.9%) male and the ethnicity indicated was “50 (5.4%) African Americans, 5 (.5%) Asian Americans, 29 (3.1%) Hispanic Americans, 11 (1.2%) Multiracial, 2 (.2%) Native Americans, 4 (.4%) Pacific Islanders, 811 (87.6%) European Americans, and 13 (1.5%) participants who identified their ethnicity as “Other” (p. 347). The empirical studies listed here show most data respondents and their ethnicity in the school counseling field. Clearly, studies that include significant numbers of Black participants and/or subjects is a gap in the literature and a gap in the school counseling field. This study, while having limitations, is important in that all participants were Black female school counselors. Burnout was also a finding in the present study, in sync with the literature on counselor burn out.

Kim and Lambie (2018) also discussed burnout. Part of the study posited that school counselors working in urban school settings experience more burnout and role confusion than school counselors working in suburban areas. This study also referenced several other studies examining burnout in school counselors. A few examples include lack of organizational support: non-counseling tasks, high student-to-counselor ratio, and clerical tasks (Bardhoshi et al., 2014). Demographic factors such as age, suggesting older school counselors experience less burnout than younger school counselors (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). Psychological constructs; self-esteem, high levels of altruism, and job satisfaction (Mullen et al., 2017; Limberg, Lambie, & Robinson, 2016–2017; Butler & Constantine, 2005).

One of the participants in the study, Laura, a 22- year school counselor reflecting less role confusion in which she attributed to being trained on a different model than school counselors today. She also shared less frustration with role confusion than the other participants in the study – encouraging school counselors who experience role confusion should build positive relationship with school administration and provide education to school staff.

The study of role and confusion has been normed on female White school counselors representing the majority of the data. I think it is important to describe how role confusion and burnout is described from another perspective – female Black school counselors. We all know the phrase “one size does not fit all.” Grouping all school counselors together indicates we all experience a phenomenon similarly. There are cultural differences to be noted and included in the research. The present study is a beginning effort to explore this phenomenon of burn out and adds to the literature in important ways.

The work of Collins (2016) on the “Mammie” identity for Black women is important to mention as part of the cultural differences that should be included in literature. Especially, Collins’s discussion on “other mothering and motherwork” in the history of Black women is an important consideration. Motherwork is seen as female Black women that involves feeding, labor, clothing, and psychological support of family, however, motherwork goes beyond ensuring the survival of one’s own family – it includes group survival of the Black race (Collins, 2016). With the role of school counseling changing overtime, female Black school counselors are engaged in motherwork with Black students, not as a requirement but rather an expectation of self. This was also an important finding of the present study in that the notion of motherwork as it is situated in Black culture, was exemplified by participants.

Summary of Findings Related to Research Question 2

School counselor self-efficacy is at risk because of role ambiguity and burnout (Jellison, 2013). School counselors are assigned non-counseling duties such as test coordination, scheduling, and school discipline to name a few, which has evolved from traditional misunderstandings of the school counseling role (Chandler, Burnham, Riechel, Dahir, Stone, Oliver, & Bledsoe, 2018). Participants in the current study claimed the most frustrating aspect of school counseling is the multiple role definitions. “Everyone gets a say in what a school counselor does” said Kristin.

Research from the field has discussed role ambiguity and burnout in the school counseling profession for over 45 years (Astramovich et al., 2013; Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Dahir, 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 1994; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). However, school counselors in this study also continued to experience role confusion and burnout after multiple attempts to clarify their role.

Most of the participants used the term “dump job”, meaning that school counselors are expected to do tasks no one else wants to do. The participants also voiced a lack of respect for the work they did. Having clerical tasks and observing other school personnel advising students on graduation requirements and providing counseling contributed to some of the participants believing that they were disregarded. Participants who mentioned their frustration about having a “dump job” said that, for the most part, their school counselor training was not relevant to their daily functions and role as a school counselor.

“Different” was the adjective school counselors voiced to describe their school training versus their current role and functions. The participants indicated that between 30 and 50% of their school counselor training was relevant, with 30% being the most cited number. Lauren

indicated the highest percentage, but she had received a different training than school counselors trained within the last 10 years. Lauren stated:

School counselors are not properly trained on the actual roles they have such as test coordinators, 504 chairperson, or school test data. Every year, teachers receive relevant training on implementing the current curriculum. School counselors do not receive any other relevant training outside of their master's program.

Lauren compared school counselors to a "high paid clerk" considering the amount of time spent on non-counseling tasks rather than what they were trained to do, which was support students in the social and emotional, academic, and career areas. Participants noted that one of the most significant factors in clarifying the school counselor role focused on administrator's understanding of the school counselor role.

All of the school counselors in this study voiced how their role change depending on how the school administrator saw their role. Mason and Perera-Diltz (2010) found a significant relationship between duties assigned to school counselors and the pre-service administrator's personal experience with school counseling services. Most of the participants mentioned they experienced more job satisfaction when their job functions were closely related to their training.

A key component in maintaining job satisfaction and school counselor mental health is remaining flexible, advice given by Joane and Ashley, who both agree that school counselor mental health is vital. Joane also shared school counselors should take advantage of mental health days and have good boundaries when it comes to work and personal life. "We're constantly making sure we are fulfilling roles and being a caretaker for those students under our care. Therefore, we need to find time to disconnect from it all." Four of the participants believe the longevity of school counselors remaining in the field is at jeopardy because of the increased burnout and role confusion. School counselors were once remaining in the field for 30 plus years. Now school counselors are seeking to become licensed mental health counselors and are

going into private practice, most likely attributed to seeking a more precise, clearer role. Being trained as a therapist in school and making it the school setting to do mostly clerical work seemed to be extremely frustrating for the participants in the study. Joane advised that school counselors remain flexible to assist with feelings of frustration felt from burnout. “Our mental health drives our work and if we are not okay, are students will be impacted.”

Although school counselors expressed frustrations surrounding role confusion and burnout, they all concluded they enjoy helping students. School counselors interposed they were attracted to school counseling as an interest in helping students overcome challenges and become successful. It seems like the perfect blend of education and psychology with a focus on helping students develop life skills, coping skills, and academic skills to become life-long learners and improve their functioning in society (Davis, 2014).

Pérusse and Goodnough’s (2005) study recommended that “additional coursework be included in school counselor preparation programs to lessen feelings of disconnect between what was taught and what was expected in their school counseling role (p. 110) .For the most part, school counselors are not aware of the roles they will be assigned after completing a 60-hour master’s program focused on the helping students with social and emotional concerns. The job roles, activities, priorities, and expectations taught in school counselor preparation programs can differ from those implemented (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). School counselors are learning core counseling skills but lack school-counseling-specific skills (The Education Trust, 2009). School counselors are trained to provide individual counseling and coordination of programs (Pérusse & Goodnough, 2001).

Summary of Findings Related to Research Question 3

The third research question focused on female Black school counselors' perspective on how cultural expectations co-mingle in their perceived role of a school counselor. Day-Vines, Patton, and Baytops (2003) defines culture as a pattern of thought, behavior, and functioning that can be seen as normative and acceptable in one cultural environment and unusual in another cultural environment. The participants in this study discussed how they view culture in their work and most of them spoke of how they determine what students may need based on their cultural background. For instance, Laura stated there are different cultural norms within the black community. Simply put it would be more effective to recognize differences and or sub-cultures within a culture. Not every Black student lives in poverty or has issues with socioeconomic issues, however they remain marginalized. School counselor should work in such a manner that “validates and affirm children from marginalized groups” (Day-Vines, Patton, and Baytops, 2003, p. 40).

School counselors who participated in this study echoed that affirmation is a cultural need for Black children. The mention of subcultures within the Black community is illustrated by the work of Ellis and Newman (1971) and Perkins (1975) describing some of the behaviors of Black students in different subcultures. I want to give a few examples of these categories to further explain this generalization. “The Ivy-Leaguer emulates middle class behavior, abides by school laws and routines, and dresses well by middle class standards” (Ellis & Newman, 1971, p.304). “Inner-city adolescents known as The Cool Cat are Black students who know how to keep their cool under pressure as a survival skill” (Perkins, 1975, p. 40). The Jester handles threats and pressure by acting foolishly to avoid facing problems head on – gaining attention and status by being funny (Ellis & Newman, 1971, p. 304; Perkins, 1975, p. 41). The “Antagonist are

marginalized students who outright bully and harass others” (Perkins, 1975, p. 42).

Acknowledgement of differences that exist within culture can decrease stereotyping Black students into one group and focus on their individual needs. Ogbu (2013) posited that developing pragmatic attitudes are essential in reducing disproportionate school failure for Black students by letting them know that a person can be a good mathematician and be Black (p. 66).

Culture is seen as an integral part of the counseling process (Pedersen, 2008). However, all participants in the study agree culture is important but also shared all students receive equal school counseling because despite differences in culture and or race. Joane stated, “I would say culture is important, but I don’t think its major because I we all have a job to do regardless of what color the child is or their background. Granted, some kids need more than others and we give them that extra support. Bottom line, we want to see every student succeed. The same implication was shared by Lauren, a 22-year counselor and Ashley, a 4-year counselor. Culture seems to determine how we work with students, but the goal is the same for all students – seeing them graduate with their cohort and being successful.

Recommendations from this Study

This qualitative case study explored the perceptions of female Black school counselors from South Louisiana on role confusion and burnout. Data was extracted from a small sample of female Black school counselors, relating their role perceptions when working with Black students and providing insight on how they experience burnout and role confusion. All participants were employed at urban school settings, serving mostly Black students from various cultural backgrounds with the majority being economically disadvantaged. The following recommendations emerged from this study.

Counselor assistants would be a great addition for school counselors to escape the non-counseling tasks and focus more responsive services to students. Having less involvement in scheduling, administrative tasks, and data entry will allow school counselor to improve their mental health by performing more duties aligned with their formal training such as counseling students, conducting groups, providing training and workshops for parents and students. Perera-Diltz and Mason (2008) reported that school all school counselors experience conflict in their role resulting from an overload of duties. School principals assign duties based on their own perception of the school counselor role (Perusse, 2004). With growing frustration of being tasked with non-counseling duties, school counselors could benefit from having more support in their role to meet the needs of students. Emerging from the current study, school counselors are parent/mentors, parent educators, cultural change agents, and more. Now, more than ever, students are in dire need of social and emotional services. School counselor are consistently tasked with non-counseling duties. To commingle the many role descriptions, including the perceptions of all educational stakeholders, school counselors simply need help to meet these demands.

Counselors should receive yearly training on the ASCA model to go over areas in their school counseling program that may need improving. Pyne (2011) posited that school counselors who implemented the ASCA national model experienced more job satisfaction and would increase longevity in the school counseling profession. Many school counselors do not have adequate training on the ASCA Model. The ASCA Model (2005) provides a professional framework for and standard of practice for school counselors. This framework includes four distinct areas: deliver indirect and direct student services, accountability by linking school counselor tasks to the student standards and professional mindsets, program assessment, and

program planning. Annual trainings on the ASCA model can dispel varied school counselor perceptions by educational stakeholders. Further, counselor educators, district leaders, and the U.S. Department of educators should come together to solidify this role of school counselors. Merging current school counselor training and the verbiage seen in the job postings may assist in administrative expectations.

Principals should be trained on the ASCA model annually and compare every task they assign to counselors to the tenets of ASCA. For example, if principals expect school counselors to do scheduling, they should have the responsibility to highlight the task in ASCA to support how such task is an appropriate school counselor duty. Clemens, Milsom, and Cashwell (2009) reported that a school counselor's relationship with administration gave credence for 49% of the variance in the school counselor's level of job satisfaction (p. 75). It is evident school principals need just as much training as school counselors on appropriate and inappropriate school counselor tasks. In order to increase graduation rates and develop systems for supporting students across cultural lines, school counselors must be given time to work with students.

Creating a self-care plan each school year that is coordinated with school administrators. Scheduling mental health days and creating a system of support with fellow counselors or colleagues can help promote good boundaries and maintain mental health. Mullens and Gutierrez (2016) speculated that school counselors experience high levels of stress as result of multiple roles and vague job descriptions. Simply put, school counselors are emotionally exhausted. Feelings of overwhelm severely impacts school counselors' attitudes, perceptions, and judgement (p. 346). Lapan (2012) considered a significant relationship to enhanced mental health of school counselors when they were engaged in more direct student services such as individual and group counseling. Moyer (2011) posited that school counselors should have their mental

health assessed and be given the opportunity to express negative feelings. In other words, school counselors should consider counseling with a professional increase career sustainability (Lambie, 2006).

The recommendation for the study unfolded from the voices of the participants included in the study. The enveloping theme embedded with the voices of the participants is a need for balance. Several participants embraced role confusion and ambiguity partly. However, they found comfort in being able to vocalize their perception of role confusion and burnout. The importance of this research resonated with each participant as they expressed the need for more opportunities to narrate such experiences that are not conveniently found in the literature.

The Need for Further Research

This present study was an initial foray into the perceptions and lived experience of female Black female school counselors, an underrepresented group within counseling, that deserve further study. There are several ways this study could be expanded further. One way to advocate for larger, more representative studies that also focus on Black female school counselors. Instead of broad invitations for school counselors to participate, dedicating studies that focus on their experience will improve the underrepresentation. Pyne (2011) reported limited diversity of responses to school counseling research indicating that “The vast majority of respondents were white and female” (p. 95) and also asserting that lack of diversity may be a limitation of the profession itself. It is evident from the current study that more research is needed to diversify the data, in an effort to echo thoughts, ideas, and feelings captured in research.

Similar studies in various settings could be conducted. While this study was set in South Louisiana, examination of Black female counselors should be conducted in other regions in the US. For example, examining how female Black school counselors in the state of Texas

experience role confusion and burnout, defining similarities or dissimilarities across the region. Conducting more research with female Black school counselors can assist school counselor educators to recruit more Black faculty members.

In addition to case studies, other kinds of investigations should be conducted on Black female school counselors. For instance, ethnographies and auto ethnographies would add much to the literature. In tandem, quasi experimental studies would also add to the field's understanding of the unique experience of Black female counselors and the impact such experiences have on school counselors remaining in the school counseling profession. There should also be a focus on school counselor preparation programs and how to fuse school counselor training and school counselor job role and function. Furthermore, a replication of the present study may yield more significant results and provide further insights into female Black school counselors experiences in their delivery of services.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of female Black school counselors have regarding role confusion and burnout, especially in the role while working with Black students. It is evident that school counselors are in dire need of clearer roles and to have administrators who find it important to understand how role confusion and burnout impact school counselors. Not having time to do what been set by the American School Counselor Association and being more tasked with inappropriate counseling duties can negatively influence student outcomes meant to benefit students receiving school counseling services.

Carey and Dimmitt (2012) found a significant relationship between positive student outcomes and the school counseling program organization, student-to-counselor ratios, counselor time use, and particular school counseling activities. The misuse of school counselors continues

to have negative consequences on their mental health. Quite so with female Black school counselors. Because they bring their cultural background and experiences into their work performance with students with either similar or different cultural backgrounds can lead to more role confusion with indistinct expectations from parents, students, administrators, and the school counselor themselves. It is the perceived role, roles and functions outlined by ASCA, the role Black students and parents think you have, and district expectations that can lead to increased frustration.

School counselors are concerned with the longevity and continuity of the school counseling. Although there maybe interest in entering the profession, remaining in it after experiencing role confusion and burnout can possibly result in school counselors leaving the field. It is obvious school counselors are a vital part of the school. As described by many of the participants, “School counselors are the heart of the school.” If such statement is true in thinking about the heart, it determines the life of the body and should be protected. Treating the heart like any other part of the body can cause the heart to stop beating. Is this what we want for school counselors? To become so busy, they do not have time to work with students?

School counselors are everything to everyone and are met with all thing’s education. It sounds like this would be a good thing. However, when students are without access to a school counselor for months at a time because they are busy with scheduling, coordinating services, data entry, and administrative tasks, school counselors do not feel they are doing what is best for students. Counselor educators may want to incorporate more educator training for counselors choosing the school setting as it may reduce role confusion. Experiencing more relevant training for actual job functions can create a smoother transition into the school counseling field as in previous trainings when school counselors were referred to as guidance counselors. The shift in

professional identity to view school counselors by their specialty has not been accepted by those who create job opportunities for them – which places school counselors as liaisons between school counseling educators and school district administrators to provide education on roles and functions. During this research, there are not current and or accurate descriptions for what school counselors are trained to do. School counselor job descriptions have not changed since the requirement of teacher certification, although teaching experience is no longer required.

Meeting the demands of student needs and changing professional identities, school counselors may seek other opportunities to cope with role confusion and burnout. After much research on understanding school counselor role confusion, more research is needed on the specific outcomes of these experiences. Overall, the goal of the school counselor is to work with students in a manner that improves student success and having clearer roles and functions can facilitate positive systemic change for all educational stakeholders.

APPENDIX A. INITIAL CONTACT LETTER TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Village Folk: Exploring the Female Black School Counselor's Perception of Role Confusion and Burnout in Urban Schools in South Louisiana

Hello, my name is Christianne Ricard and I am a doctoral candidate in the P-12 Educational Leadership Program at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge Louisiana. The purpose of my email is to invite you to participate in my dissertation study. The purpose of this study is to learn more about the thoughts, experiences, and perceptions related to role confusion and burnout of female Black school counselors when working with Black students. Interviews have a duration time of approximately 30 to 60 minutes in length and will be audio recorded. The interview will take place (via Zoom due to COVID – 19), a video conferencing application.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study. The findings for this study can provide evidence to improve professional development for counselors, administrators and school counselor preparation programs alike. If you are interested in participating or have any questions regarding this research, please contact me at cricar5@lsu.edu. If you are unable to participate, feel free to share this email with a colleague. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you,

Sincerely,

Christianne Ricard
Louisiana State University
P-12 Educational Leadership Doctoral Candidate
cricar5@lsu.edu
225-278-9051

APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT LETTERS

Village People: Exploring the Female Black School Counselor's Perception of Role Confusion and Burnout in Urban Schools in South Louisiana

You are being invited to participate in a research study called “**Village People: Exploring the Female Black School Counselor's Perception of Role Confusion and Burnout in Urban Schools in South Louisiana**” conducted by Christianne Ricard, a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at Louisiana State University, (LSU). This research will complete the dissertation requirement for graduation. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Margaret Sulentic-Dowell, Professor at LSU. You were selected as a possible participant for this study because you are currently a credentialed counselor working in a school setting with a minimum of one year of experience.

Purpose of this Study The purpose of this study is to learn about the experiences in relationships between female Black school counselors and Black students. The findings of this study may provide insight to role challenges for school counselors in the educational environment.

Procedures You will be asked to participate in a 30-60-minute audio taped interview. Audio recording is a condition of participation in this study and I will take notes during the interview. During the interview, you will be asked to share experiences of your perception of your professional role. The interview will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and location. Before commencing the interview, you will be assigned a pseudonym. The interview will be transcribed by Rev, an audio to text web-based resource. You will have two weeks to review the final transcript to ensure accuracy and exactitude. Edits and corrections will be made to ensure you are in 100% agreement of all recorded transcripts. The audio tape will be placed under lock and key in a file cabinet at my home office.

Potential Benefits There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study. However, your participation may cause you to reflect back on your shared experiences, thoughts and feelings of your profession and its impact on student achievement.

Potential Risks and Discomforts While no research is entirely risk-free, this study poses minimal risk to you. Minimal risks include recalling uncomfortable subject matter during the interview, breach of confidentiality, identity revealed and/or audio recording released or misplaced. A pseudonym will be assigned to you from the inception of this study and will be the only identifying moniker throughout this study.

Confidentiality Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. A pseudonym will be assigned to you from the inception of this study.

The interview will be audio recorded, and you will have the right to review the final transcription of the recording. I will maintain complete field notes, records, and consent forms, raw unedited/edited, and written data stored in a locked file cabinet in my home office for 3 years

from the date the study is completed and then destroyed. Tapes will be erased immediately after transcription. Electronic/digital data will be kept in a password protected computer in my home office. This data will only be used for this research study.

Participation and Withdrawal You can choose to participate or refuse participation in this study. If you volunteer to participate, you may withdraw at any time without consequence or penalty. Participation or non-participation will not affect your employment status or any other personal consideration or right you usually expect. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which in the opinion of the researcher warrant doing so.

Identification of investigators If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Christianne Ricard at cricar5@lsu.edu, or via telephone (225) 278-9051. You may also contact my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Sulentic-Dowell (504) 251- 5465 email: sdowell@lsu.edu

Rights of Research Subjects You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Office of Research and Economic Development, Louisiana State University(LSU), 130 David Boyd Hall Baton Rouge, LA 70803; Telephone: (225) 578-5983 or email to research@lsu.edu

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR A NON-CLINICAL STUDY

1. VILLAGE FOLK: EXPLORING THE FEMALE BLACK SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S PERCEPTION OF ROLE CONFUSION AND BURNOUT IN URBAN SCHOOLS IN SOUTH LOUISIANA

2. The purpose of this multiple case study (Stake, 2013; Yin, 2003) is to explore the perceptions of female Black school counselors and how they cope with cultural expectations amid the role confusion and burnout that currently exist within the school counseling profession, particularly in urban schools. Existing research suggests increased burnout and role ambiguity in the context of a school counselor's professional identity (Nassar-McMillan, Karvonen, Perez, & Abrams, 2009) with little focus on cultural differences. This study intends to bring awareness about the phenomenon experienced among female Black school counselors in urban schools in Louisiana.

3. Risks: The only study risk is the inadvertent release of sensitive information found in the questionnaire/interview questions. However, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. Files will be kept in secure cabinets to which only the investigator has access.

4. Benefits: The study may yield valuable information in understanding role confusion within the school counseling profession from the perspective of female Black school counselors.

5. Investigators: The following investigator is available for questions about this study,

Monday - Friday, 2:45p - 4:30 PM

Christianne Ricard

crical5@lsu.edu

225-278-9051

Tuesday – Friday, 10 AM – 5PM

Dr. Margaret-Mary Sulentic Dowell

sdowell@lsu.edu

225-578-5998

6. Performance Site: Interviews will be conducted over the phone or in person via Zoom, a teleconferencing platform that will allow the participant and I to meet.

7. Number of subjects: 9

8. Subject Inclusion: Female school counselors, with at least one-year school experience, are certified school counselors in the state of Louisiana, who do not report psychological or neurological conditions, and who identify as Black.

Exclusion criteria: School counselors who are not female, with less than one year of experience, not certified in state of Louisiana, report any psychological or neurological conditions, and who do not identify as Black will be excluded from the study. To participate in this study, you must meet the requirements of inclusion.

9. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

10. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

11. Signatures: The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Dennis Landin, Institutional Review Board (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

The study subject has indicated to me that he/she is unable to read. I certify that I have read this consent form to the subject and explained that by completing the signature line above, the subject has agreed to participate.

12. For research involving the collection of identifiable private information or identifiable bio-specimens one of the following must be listed on the consent form:

Identifiers might be removed from the identifiable private information or identifiable bio-specimens. After removal, the information or bio-specimens may be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent.

Yes, I give permission _____
Signature

No, I do not give permission _____
Signature

OR

Your information or bio-specimens collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, may be used or distributed for future research.

Yes, I give permission _____
Signature

No, I do not give permission _____
Signature

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR CONSENT FORM FOR A NON-CLINICAL STUDY

1. VILLAGE FOLK: EXPLORING THE FEMALE BLACK SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S PERCEPTION OF ROLE CONFUSION AND BURNOUT IN URBAN SCHOOLS IN SOUTH LOUISIANA

2. The purpose of this multiple case study (Stake, 2013; Yin, 2003) is to explore the perceptions of female Black school counselors and how they cope with cultural expectations amid the role confusion and burnout that currently exist within the school counseling profession, particularly in urban schools. Existing research suggests increased burnout and role ambiguity in the context of a school counselor's professional identity (Nassar-McMillan, Karvonen, Perez, & Abrams, 2009) with little focus on cultural differences. This study intends to bring awareness about the phenomenon experienced among female Black school counselors in urban schools in Louisiana.

3. Risks: The only study risk is the inadvertent release of sensitive information found in the questionnaire/interview questions. However, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. Files will be kept in secure cabinets to which only the investigator has access.

4. Benefits: The study may yield valuable information in understanding role confusion within the school counseling profession from the perspective of female Black school counselors.

5. Investigators: The following investigator is available for questions about this study,

Monday - Friday, 2:45p - 4:30 PM

Christianne Ricard

crical5@lsu.edu

225-278-9051

Tuesday – Friday, 10 AM – 5PM

Dr. Margaret-Mary Sulentic Dowell

sdowell@lsu.edu

225-578-5998

6. Performance Site: Interviews will be conducted over the phone or in person via Zoom, a teleconferencing platform that will allow the participant and I to meet.

7. Number of subjects: 9

8. Subject Inclusion: Female school counselors, with at least one-year school experience, are certified school counselors in the state of Louisiana, who do not report psychological or neurological conditions, and who identify as Black.

Exclusion criteria: School counselors who are not female, with less than one year of experience, not certified in state of Louisiana, report any psychological or neurological conditions, and who do not identify as Black will be excluded from the study. To participate in this study, you must meet the requirements of inclusion.

9. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

10. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

11. Signatures: The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Dennis Landin, Institutional Review Board (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

School Administrator Signature: _____ Date: _____

The study subject has indicated to me that he/she is unable to read. I certify that I have read this consent form to the subject and explained that by completing the signature line above, the subject has agreed to participate.

12. For research involving the collection of identifiable private information or identifiable bio-specimens one of the following must be listed on the consent form:

Identifiers might be removed from the identifiable private information or identifiable bio-specimens. After removal, the information or bio-specimens may be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent.

Yes, I give permission _____
Signature

No, I do not give permission _____
Signature

OR

Your information or bio-specimens collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, may be used or distributed for future research.

APPENDIX C. IRB APPROVAL LETTER

ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST



Institutional Review Board
Dr. Alex Cohen, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu
lsu.edu/research

TO: Margaret Mary Sulentic-Dowell
ELRC

FROM: Alex Cohen
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: June 16, 2020

RE: IRB# E11967

TITLE: Village Folk: Exploring the Female Black School Counselor's Perception of Role Confusion and Burnout in Urban Schools in South Louisiana

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: Modification

Brief Modification Description: The type of study is now qualitative, remove Dr. MacGregor from the study and add Dr. Sulentic-Dowell, revise the number of participants to 9, add an interview and remove the quantitative instrument, change the title of the study.

Review date: 6/12/2020

Approved X **Disapproved** _____

Approval Date: 6/14/2020

Approval Expiration Date: 11/11/2022

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable):

By: Alex Cohen, Chairman _____

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –
Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE: Make sure you use bcc when emailing more than one recipient. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.**

**All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/research>*

APPENDIX D. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Village People: Exploring the Female Black School Counselor's Perception of Role Confusion and Burnout in Urban Schools in South Louisiana

Interview Guide

Introductory demographic questions:

1. Do you have a current school counselor certification?
2. How long have you worked as a school counselor?
3. What are the demographics of the student population of where you work?
4. What is your schools' SPS score?

Questions about Female Black School Counselors and their perceived role while working with Black students

5. What other role expectations do you think you have other than what is outlined in the American School Counselor Association Role Statement for school counselor responsibilities? Please share stories of work experiences of these additional roles.
6. How important are these roles in your life or work performance? Please explain.
7. Thomas, Witherspoon, and Speight (2008) supported that notion that past experiences influence perceptions, emotional wellbeing and coping skills of Black women. What past experiences have shaped your views and work as a school counselor?
8. How connected do you feel to Black students? Please explain.
9. What expectations do you think society has for you as a Black woman? Please share stories and experiences from family, friends, work, and social media, and so on.
 - a. What expectation do you think other Black people, especially Black students and parents have for you as a Black woman?

Questions about Black Culture and Role Confusion

10. How do you define culture? In the Black community?
11. How important is culture in your work performance? Please explain.
12. In what ways does your role as a school counselor change? Please share if you have been a school counselor at different schools in this district and if there were notable changes in roles.
13. How important is the school administrators understanding of the school counselor's role?

- a. What expectations do you think administrators have of you?
- b. What expectations do you think parents of students have of you?
- c. What expectations do you think students have of you?

Question about School Counselor Training

14. As it relates to your school counselor training, how relative is your counselor training to what your actual job functions are now?

- a. How much of your training pertains to your perceived roles and expectations?
- b. If you could change anything about your preparation and or training, what would it be?

Questions about coping with role confusion and burnout

15. In what ways do you think multiple role definitions impact your well-being? If you'd like, please share specific stories of this in your life and or work experience.

16. How important is your mental health in life and work? Are there experiences in your work as a school counselor that has positively or negatively impacted your mental health?

- a. How might you improve your mental health?

17. What's the most frustrating aspect of being a school counselor?

18. What is the most frustrating aspect of being a female Black school counselor?

APPENDIX E. PARTICIPANT EMAIL TO SCHEDULE INTERVIEW

Dear Dissertation Participant,

Hello, my name is Christianne Ricard and I am a doctoral candidate in the P-12 Educational Leadership Program at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge Louisiana. The purpose of my email is to invite you to participate in my dissertation study. The purpose of this study is to learn more about the thoughts, experiences, and perceptions related to role confusion and burnout of female Black school counselors when working with Black students. Interviews will have a duration time of approximately 30 to 60 minutes in length and will be audio recorded. The interview will take place (via Zoom due to COVID – 19), a video conferencing application.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study. The findings for this study can provide evidence to improve professional development for counselors, administrators and school counselor preparation programs alike. If you are interested in participating or have any questions regarding this research, please contact me at cricar5@lsu.edu. If you are unable to participate, feel free to share this email with a colleague. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you,

Sincerely,

Christianne Ricard
Louisiana State University
P-12 Educational Leadership Doctoral Candidate
cricar5@lsu.edu
225-278-9051

Please see the attached disclosure and the consent form. Please keep the participant selection disclosure for your records, sign the consent form and email it back to me at your convenience.

Upon receiving your consent form, please choose one of the following times for your interview or email me with your request. Upon receiving your request, you will be provided with a Zoom link for you scheduled time.

Saturdays, 2:30 PM, 3:30 PM, or 4:30 PM

Mondays, 3:30 PM

Tuesdays 1:00 PM, 2:00 PM, 4:00PM

Sincerely,

APPENDIX F. MEMBER CHECK

Member Check Email

Dear Dissertation Participant,

As part of my research design, you are welcome to review the transcribed interview and provide feedback. If you choose not to review the transcription, there is no further action. Attached is your transcribed interview.

Interview transcript is accurate:

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Other comments:

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to text, call, or email me. Thank you in advanced.

Sincerely,

Christianne Leah Ricard
Louisiana State University
P-12 Education Leadership PhD student
cricar5@lsu.edu
225-278-9051

APPENDIX G. THANK YOU LETTER

Dear Dissertation Participant,

A sincere thank you for taking time to participate in this study. If you were invited and did not participant, I want to extend warm regards for your time and consideration. It is because of you that I was able to complete my research and provide valuable information in the field of education.

Please contact me via phone or email at 225-278-9051 or cricar5@lsu.edu. Once again, a sincere thank you!

Sincerely,

Christianne Leah Ricard
Louisiana State University
P-12 Education Leadership PhD student
cricar5@lsu.edu
225-278-9051

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VITA

Christianne Ricard was born and raised in Hammond Louisiana. Before attending Louisiana State University to begin her doctorate journey, she attended Southeastern Louisiana University, where she earned a Bachelor of Art in Psychology in 2008. Upon completing her Bachelor of Art program, Christianne worked in social services, increasing her interest in counseling. From 2013 to 2015, Christianne returned to Southeastern Louisiana University where she received a Master of Education in Counselor Education.

While at Southeastern, Christianne was elected as President of the Lambda Upsilon Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, a national honor society for counselors. She received several awards and scholarships including the National Board for Certified Counselors scholarship, Southeastern Counseling Department Scholarship, and the Louisiana School Counselor Association Scholarship.

In 2019, Christianne earned an Educational Specialist Distinction from Louisiana State University while pursuing her doctoral studies. Still presently employed with the East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS), she was awarded Elementary School Counselor of the 2018 to 2019 school year and New Counselor of the Year for the 2016 to 2017 school year. She continues to serve in the role of a school counselor for EBRPSS which began in 2016. Additionally, Christianne is the owner and lead counselor for Renewed Mind Counseling and Consultation where she provides mental health counseling in Baton Rouge Louisiana where she currently resides.